INCOMPATIBILITY IN MARRIAGE

FELIX ADLER

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INCOMPATIBILITY IN MARRIAGE

BOOKS BY FELIX ADLER

Incompatibility in Marriage; and Other Essays

The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal

An Ethical Philosophy of Life

The World Crisis and Its Meaning

Marriage and Divorce

The Moral Instruction of Children

INCOMPATIBILITY IN MARRIAGE

By

FELIX ADLER

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D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK MCMXXX LONDON

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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NOTE

The addresses in this volume were delivered at considerable intervals and under widely different circumstances. No attempt was made by the editor at revision with a view to uniformity in style or to disturb the spontaneity of platform utterance.

I

INCOMPATIBILITY IN MARRIAGE

INCOMPATIBILITIES are natural, are to be expected; we do not spontaneously fall into tune with each other; mutual adjustments must be achieved consciously, do not happen of themselves. In the case of parents and their sons and daughters, the strain due to discrepancies is often severe enough. But there is this mitigating circumstance, that at the time when a son or daughter reaches the age of manhood or womanhood, that is, when he or she begins to take hold of life in good earnest, the closeness of the relation is relaxed, a partial separation at least occurs, and in consequence, the acuteness of the discrepancies is diminished—while in the case of marriage just the reverse takes place. The man and the woman begin the marriage relation at a time when they enter on the most active period of their lives, when they have attained a more or less developed selfhood, and when the relation between them is bound to become closer and closer, because of their joint responsibility for the children and their mutual entanglement in each other's fortune. The strain consequently becomes more severe, unless harmony is effected.

One other difference is that the filial relation is

involuntary, if there are conflicting traits they could not have been foreseen, while marriage is voluntary. Why then are those who enter into this relation not at greater pains to ascertain whether the prospect be friction or peace? Some one the other day drank from a bottle containing poison, thinking it was medicine, and suffered terribly. Humanly speaking, one could not help pitying the sufferer—but why did he drink poison? Why did he not first look at the label? Why did those who complain so vehemently, and ask the world's commiseration on account of their infelicity—why did they not look at the label? Why did they not take the precaution to find out whether they were really fitted for each other? One obvious reason is that blind passion takes the bit between its teeth and throws its rider, reason. Passion is indiscriminating. It is a kind of hunger, not selective of its object. But on this sensual aspect, which explains a thousand and one thoughtless, hasty marriages, it is unnecessary to dwell.

Romantic love is a favorite subject of the poets, and Emerson, in one of his prose poems, describes very finely and eloquently the rapture of romantic illusion, as well as its gradual wearing away. He speaks of the nameless charm that glances from one and another face and form, of the time in the life of a youth or girl when a single note of one voice could make the heart bound, when every trivial circumstance, a ribbon, a glove, associated with one

being, is treasured as priceless, when the veins of the lover are filled, as it were, "with the blood of the violet, of the clover, and of the lily," when all nature becomes melodious with the inner music of the soul. This kind of love is the deification of a person. But when the person does not bear out the deification, blemishes, defects, hindrances, disproportions appear, and are seen more and more distinctly, as the veil of illusion becomes diaphanous—threadbare. At last they see each other as they are, and then what happens? Emerson says that they take a sort of satisfaction in realizing that though they each have their blemishes and faults, they can correct each other without offense taken on either side. At last they discover that the true end of marriage was not the love by each of the other's personality, but growth in what he calls virtue and wisdom. In the meantime they are to resign themselves in good fellowship to a cheerful, disengaged furtherance of each other's designs, whether in presence or absence, until the day comes when they are entirely released from attachment each to the other, and they blend with the one world soul.

I have not the space to criticize in detail Emerson's theory of love. The gist of it is that the aim of our personal relations is to be put in training for a wholly impersonal existence. To me, on the contrary, personality is the essential fact in life, and growth into a more personalized, more distinct personality, is the chief aim to be served by the personal

relations. Emerson's description, however, of the illusion or infatuation that veils the character of a person of the opposite sex is true enough, and together with the mist of passion, explains why matches that were certainly not made in heaven are made on earth—why those whom no God has joined together, those who never should have entered into this relation, find themselves tied for better or worse. For I may say in passing that the tie is for better or worse, whether people will have it so or not. It cannot ever be wholly rent; the surgical remedy of divorce, while it may ameliorate, can never wholly undo the consequences of the first mistake.

I shall now present briefly certain other intrusive factors that rise up between the man and woman in marriage, and render the adjustment difficult. One of them is the circumstance that the marriage unites not only two individuals but two family connections, and that the respective families or clans often clash against each other, the young husband and wife having the difficult rôle of shock absorbers. The one clan may think itself superior to the other on account of greater wealth, or superior social station, or pretensions of some sort—the other naturally resents the pride of the former; and the poor shock-absorbers, exposed to frequent jars of this kind, will soon begin to jar against each other. Or the intrusion of the family connection into the peace of the new home may take on another form. A

conflict may arise between the attachment, say, of the daughter to her mother, and *her* attachment to her husband. The passage from the old home, where she was a member, to the new home, where she is to be mistress, and to the company of a man who only a short time ago was a stranger to her, has not been successfully accomplished. Or the mother on her part is not wise, is jealous perhaps of the man who now claims the major share of her daughter's affection, or is secretly disappointed that the girl has not made a match in her view more suitable, more in accord with her own ambitions.

Then, too, there is the tragic discord produced by profound differences of religion, differences in the attitude toward life and the world. A notable French novel, "Jean Barois," gives in the form of letters and conversations a vivid account of such a domestic tragedy. The husband, originally devout, had become a freethinker, a *libre penseur* of the French type. The wife, when she saw her husband astray, was distressed, dismayed, unable to understand. He on his part was willing to make concessions, to accompany her to mass, to permit the first child to be baptized. But this could not satisfy her, he must not only be present but take part. He pleaded that in self-respect, in intellectual honesty, he could not join in the practices of a religion in which he no longer believed. "But if I beg you to do so!" was all she could retort. So matters went on from bad to worse. She attributed his persist-

ence in his errors to sheer obstinacy. Finally, her love for him changed into detestation, and one day, after a vain argument, she broke out into the words, *"Tu me fais horreur!"* Then followed the irremediable break.

Intermarriage between persons who grew up in different religious beliefs, and who have both outgrown them, is not only permissible but, in my view, advisable. But where the early faith is still deeply rooted, the peril of a rupture can only be averted by the most genuine loyalty. The free-thinking husband especially is apt to deceive himself in this matter. Because to him religious belief is of no importance, or of little importance, and because he is willing to let his wife believe as she sees fit, he fatally overlooks the fact that she will not and cannot, unless her love is deeper than her so-called faith, let him think as he sees fit; and she cannot help trying to convert him to her faith, or, if she fails, to be miserable and unhappy and often to turn from him.

A serious incompatibility exists, making accommodation difficult, when the one is highly educated and the other relatively uneducated, when the one has had the advantage of a wide cultural and social background, and the other has lived in a narrow social environment, with its provincialism, its pettinesses, its stubborn prejudices. Nothing is more characteristic of culture than flexibility; nothing more characteristic of the lack of culture than rigidity. In the past one would have taken the intellec-

tual man, the scientist, the author, married to a mentally inferior woman as an example. Nowadays, when women go to college, it is as often as not the man who is the mental inferior, and the woman the superior.

And in addition to all these general causes, there are the individual discrepancies, the traits of one that do not match with those of the other, or faults, like short temper, or arbitrariness, or excessive love of finery and pleasure, or slovenliness; and cruelty, too, whether raw and palpable, or cynical and wrapt in polite phrases. And the wonder is that there are only three hundred odd thousand divorces in the United States, that the divorce mills in Reno are not even more active, that the annulments of marriage are not more numerous, that experimentalism in the sex relation is not more frequent among the young, that in a word the prospects of the family and the conjugal bond are not still more dubious than they are actually.

There are two main causes that have prevented the more general débâcle of marriage. One of them has acted in the past and is still operative to-day, and will, we may well believe, continue to make for permanence in the future. The other acted in the past but is no longer operative in the present, and its place must be supplied. The former of these two causes is the maternal and paternal feeling for the child, a powerful, human, ineradicable impulse. And the other, no longer operative now, is the obliga-

tion felt by married people to preserve the existing social order. To serve the social order meant for the legitimate son to succeed to the father's place, to inherit the estate, carry on the existing social tradition. For the sake of legitimate succession, the monogamic family had to be maintained, husband and wife remaining together. No matter what the friction between them, their aversions must be overcome, since promiscuity, or frequent divorce, clouds the succession. The flaw in this conception of marriage, namely, that it implied fidelity on the part of the woman but not equally on the part of the man, I need not stop here to discuss. The point I make is that a social motive served to overcome incompatibility; and what I say now is that a higher social motive must be substituted, to coöperate with parental attachment to children, to reënforce and enlighten that parental attachment which, while I believe it to be perennial, is itself in the present transition period, relaxing somewhat.

What higher social, let me rather say, spiritual motive, then, can be presented? What can the ethical view of life contribute toward the solution of this problem of all problems? I have sometimes been accused of indifference to the sufferings of people who are shut up in uncongenial companionship so closely that they cannot get away from each other. I am not indifferent to suffering; I would certainly extend relief from pain wherever possible. But I do not agree with those who think that where there

is pain there must be relief, for whom pain is the last impossible thing. There are interests more compelling even than the happiness of a man or a woman. In the olden days the imperative interest was to keep society going as it is, to provide successors, to fill the vacant places. To-day, to my mind, the imperative, super-eminent interest is to contribute to the progress of society toward its spiritual goal.

I may stop here for a moment to explain. The fundamental fault, as I take it, is in the way people enter into marriage—either giddily, just drifting into it, without any clear ideas as to what it is to mean for them for the rest of their days—(now you cannot get anything fine from a relation unless you know beforehand what you have a right to expect; you may not get it then, but you will certainly fail to get it if you have no definite objective in mind)—or they enter this partnership, and it is a partnership, with wholly false expectations as to what they ought to be and do for each other. People think of the stretch of life, the thirty or forty years which they spend together as if it were wholly their life, to do with what they please. They do not think of these thirty or forty years as the short section of a line stretching backward and forward beyond them. They do not think of the stream of life that passes through them as coming out of its sources in the far-off origins of life, and as destined to sweep onward into the sea of life—the stream to be purified, the current to be intensified in power

as it passes through them. In former days there was at least recognized an overarching purpose in marriage. Marriage was regarded as an instrumentality for a social end. There was an awe-inspiring presence that brooded over the fireside, something greater than the pleasure and pain of the couple, something that had the authority to override discrepancy and demand accommodation. This something was the preservation of the status quo, including the precious things which all the earlier generations had achieved. Marriage to-day is to be ethically conceived as an institution for extending and enhancing the work of civilization, for ennobling, exalting the human type in oneself and in one's children. Marriage is the channel in which the higher life of the human race is to be purified and intensified.

But purify and intensify are figurative terms; what is their practical application? What do they imply as to the conduct of the man towards the woman and the woman towards the man? Briefly, that they shall seek to develop, the one the best possible manhood in the man, the other the best possible womanhood in the woman. Make yourself the kind of a man that will bring out in your wife the best that is latent in her; make yourself the kind of a woman that will bring out in your husband what is best, most manly, in him. And certain conditions may be mentioned that are essential to the performance of this office.

1. The exclusion of egotism. I do not mean

merely the brutal egotism that seeks to dominate and to crush the will of the other. I mean also the mutual egotism, the kind of give and take relation where each still seeks happiness, but seeks it indirectly at the hands of the other. No; there should be, as I think, entire consecration to one object—to bring out, as the saying goes, "the statue in the block," the word that has never been articulated, that most exquisite thing, the distinctive personality in the other.

Of what the best in the woman, the essential womanliness in her, is, we have glorious hints. We know that it implies a certain graciousness that is the radiance of an inner grace; a certain motherliness, even towards us adults; a certain faculty of giving peace.

Du bist die Ruh
Der Friede mild

—in the highest type of woman a certain sibylline quality, instinct with divination. At present new ideals are forming. To the attributes mentioned others are being added: a developed mentality, the intellectual power, long neglected, challenged into serious activity; a wide outlook on citizenship and on social progress. All this and more will enter into the new ideal of womanliness. And the service which the husband may render his wife is to aid her in striving toward this ideal, just as, conversely, the woman shall help the man in his advance toward essential manhood, meaning the apprentice to be-

come master in his vocation, and essentially just in all relations. The sacredness and the zest of the conjugal relation consists precisely in this—the incessant quest of the elusive best in each.

2. There is involved also the principle and the recognition of mutual dependence. Many a marriage is wrecked because, though the man is willing to do for the wife what is ordinarily required of him, to support her in comfort, even in luxury (perhaps in too great luxury), he has failed to feel and to make her feel his dependence on her. Even the man of superior education is dependent on his wife though she be inferior to him in education, in certain important particulars. His vocational colleagues, no doubt, are able to rate him better on his professional side, but in respect to what counts most, his personality, the kind of man he is becoming in and through his professional work, woman, gifted by nature to read personality, is the better critic and judge. Especially in regard to the work they do for their offspring are the two dependent on each other.

3. And again, there is this other spiritual principle involved, that in marriage more than in any other relation, one has to avoid the error, I had almost said the crime, of putting the mask of finality on the face of one's companion, and assuming that no change is to be expected, that there are no undeclared potentialities to be hoped for. "I know my wife like a book"—that is the fatal mistake. No one knows another absolutely—least of all the soul that travels at one's side.

It follows from what has been said that a new statement of the social purpose of marriage is the prime need. The social purpose of it can no longer be defined as the maintenance of the status quo, the securing of legitimate successors to fill the ranks as they are left vacant. The social purpose of marriage requires, on the basis of the ethical equality of the sexes, their unity in the advancement of the human type, first through their influence upon one another, and then through their joint influence upon their offspring. And to give this new direction to the thought of marriage, better to inform those who enter into it as to what they ought to expect from it, is perhaps the best service which those who are interested in the improvement of mankind can render.

Incompatibilities, I repeat, are natural. They can and must be overcome. Once let it be understood that incompatibility is a cause for parting company, and the evil will only be aggravated. Thereafter, every slight disagreement will be magnified and exaggerated into an insurmountable difficulty, from which relief can only be obtained by running away. Once let the social purpose of marriage be lost out of sight, let the institution be published as one that exists only or fundamentally for the "self-expression" of the man and the woman, and the most powerful incentive for transcending differences and creating harmony will be absent.

At present the flood of divorce is mounting higher and higher, and cannot be stemmed by any external

means—there must be an internal change—although some of the worst scandals, at least the scandal, for instance, of the woman who lately divorced her thirteenth husband, should in very decency be put an end to. Men and women being as they are, divorce in extreme cases will have to be granted, though for my part, I still stand, as a counsel of perfection, for separation rather than divorce, with the door left open always for reunion. I think of the worst case. I think of a person who has a fine view of life, and who is married to one who turns out to be ignoble, flippant, or even base. Nevertheless, I do not see how any one who has taken the hand of another in wedlock, and who understands what he has thereby charged himself with, the entire care of another human being, body and soul—I say I do not see how such a one can cut off his partner, any more than he could deliberately cut off a limb of his own—how he can set such a one adrift, how he can ever, in honor, devolve from himself the responsibility he has assumed.

Fortunately, we need not dwell only on the failures. Fortunately, there are many successful marriages, successful not only in the ordinary sense, but more or less spiritually successful. Emerson, in describing the ultimate stages of conjugal attachment, what he conceives to be its decline, says: "At last they discover that all that which first drew them together, those once sacred features, that magical charm, was deciduous, like the scaffolding with which

the house is built." And the true office of these personal relations he thinks is to detach the persons from one another, to put them into training for a kind of impersonal, pantheistical continuance. I do not for one moment subscribe to this anti-climax. Emerson, exquisite in many of his insights, has here missed the essential truth. "All," he says, "that once drew them together, those once sacred features"—are they then sacred no longer because the bloom has fled from the cheeks, and time has writ his wrinkled scripture on the once smooth brow? Does not the eye remain, the sanctuary in which burns the light of the soul, a light that fails not? And the charm, is it no longer magical? Has the spell that held them lost its effect? Together they have traveled the road of life, and remembrance now holds them close, remembrance of many hours of ineffable felicity, of a sense of union as near to bliss as mortal hearts can realize, of high aspirations pursued in common, of sorrows shared—sacramental sorrows. And now, nearing the end, hand in hand, they look forth upon the wide universe, and the love which they found in themselves and still find there to the last, becomes to them a pledge of the vaster love that moves *beyond* the stars and suns.

II

THE SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS OLD AGE

IT will doubtless be remembered how great a discussion was aroused some years ago by Sir William Osler's disparagement of the later years of life, in his "Counsels and Ideals." Much of the attention which his pronouncements received was unquestionably due to what may be called the prevailing *physicism* of our age. I do not say *materialism* because materialism is that now rather discredited system of philosophy which avers that material phenomena are cause and mental phenomena effect. Physicism simply emphasizes the importance of the physical side of life and urges, not its causal relation, but a strict parallelism between man's physical and mental strength. On the basis of physicism it is assumed that when a man is physically at the top of his bent, he is so mentally as well; that as the body waxes the mind waxes, and as the body wanes the mind wanes. It is no doubt this assumption of physicism that underlies Dr. Osler's bold and unqualified statement that the work of the world in literature and science is done by men between twenty and forty; for he can hardly have based such a statement on a sufficient number of carefully collated facts.

Now there is much truth in this doctrine of parallelism. *Mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a sound body—is not an idle proverb. It is true that bodily states affect the mind. But the parallelism is not perfect, for it is also true that some of the greatest intellectual feats have been achieved by persons whose bodies were diseased. Disease affects the mind, but the mind also affects disease; and we have no reason to consider ourselves merely the slaves of our bodily conditions; to capitulate when the hair begins to silver, and elasticity to lessen; to read our doom in signs of physical decay, as if, of necessity, the physical decline meant mental decline also. We have the mental power to defy untoward physical condition, just as we have the mental power to control not indeed all but some diseases. It is this physical view that has given more weight than is justly their due to the utterances of our author.

What are these utterances? What about the opinions themselves? Dr. Osler says flatly that the work of the world has been done by men under forty. He speaks of "la crise de quarante ans," the crisis of the fortieth year. He says that the work of civilization has been done between the third and fourth decades, that the period between twenty and forty means progress, creation, production, and the period between forty and seventy means slowness and conservatism. He says that the life of a teacher should be divided into three epochs—up to twenty, study; from twenty to forty, investigation; from forty to

sixty, profession, and at sixty, not chloroform, but retirement on a double allowance—which is a very different matter. But he states without qualifications that the work of the world has been done by men under forty.

This assertion is a sweeping one, including science and literature, art and government, and executive functions generally. It seems to me perfectly plain that in this extension at all events the statement is unfounded. In literature certainly some of the greatest work of the world has been done by men no longer in the prime of life. Dante's "Divine Comedy" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" are the two greatest epics of the modern world and both were written late in life. The *Paradiso* was written when Dante was past fifty-three. In Milton's career we find two periods of blossoming, the springtime and the autumn. The springtime gave us "Comus," "L'Allegro," etc. Then came the long interval in which Milton fought the literary battles of Cromwell and the Commonwealth, a period of political pamphleteering. And then between fifty and sixty-three he produced his greatest work, "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonistes."

If we think of the great artists, our minds will at once revert to Michelangelo, whose "Last Judgment" was painted in his old age, and who at sixty experienced a sudden inundation of youthful passion and power. To him, as to Goethe, there came a sudden renewal of the springtime. A pure, profound

love for Vittoria Colonna unsealed new possibilities in the mighty painter's nature, and then he gave the world his sonnets. Again in the last period of his life he became an architect. He was in four arts distinguished—painting, sculpture, architecture and poetry; and he was between eighty and ninety when he remodeled the designs of St. Peter's and attained his great eminence as an architect. Titian, we know, accepted and carried out commissions up to the time of his death, in his ninety-ninth year, and even then he was carried off, not by old age, but by the plague.

In philosophy, certainly, some of the greatest work of the world has been produced by men beyond *la crise de quarante ans*. Plato thinks that a man ought not to begin to write philosophy until he is fifty; and among the great German philosophers there are no names that stand out more illustrious than those of Leibnitz and Immanuel Kant. Leibnitz published his *Théodicée* and the sketch of the "Monadology" in 1710 and 1714, in his sixty-fourth and sixty-eighth year, while the immortal Kant, who was the founder of modern German philosophy, published his three great Critiques between 1781 and 1790—that is to say, between his fifty-seventh and sixty-sixth years. They were the fruit of those very decades which Dr. Osler characterizes as the conservative period of life. So we meet with creation of the highest order between fifty and seventy, and in the case of the artists even between eighty and ninety. In Kant's case, not only did the originality of his age exceed that of his prime, but his

radicalism also far outstripped in its boldness the opinions of his youth.

I am not opposing a sweeping assertion of my own to that of Dr. Osler. I do not say that the work of the world is done by men over fifty, as he says it is done by men under forty. I simply say that some men blossom early and some blossom late, and that there is no reason why, if one has blossomed early, he should not experience a second bloom. Certainly in some lines of work the weight of evidence seems to be in favor of the later period.

"But these are the illustrious men," some one may say. To be sure; but the great creative work has been done by the few, and if we can point out a few of these few, who have done the greater part of their work in the latter period of their lives, such a reply is certainly pertinent. But leaving aside the illustrious and speaking of average men, I should like to point out that there is one kind of excellence which is not likely to be attained by the average man before he has passed the meridian, that is, the excellence which depends upon judgment. Judgment, which Aristotle extols as the lamp that lights men's footsteps in the precarious path of right, is important in all departments of life. The attitude of the scientific experimenter depends upon keenness of observation and the faculty of rapid thinking, as well as on judgment; but I should not be at all surprised if it were found that those operations of the mind which depend upon judgment reach

their apogee in the latter period of life. At any rate, that kind of mental excellence which depends upon judgment is not likely to be attained early; and it is judgment that is supremely needed in practical life and in conduct, which Matthew Arnold calls three-fourths of life. That quality which is needed for three-quarters of life is a very important quality, and if it appear only in the latter part of life, we must admit that the importance of the latter part of life not only equals but perhaps surpasses that of the earlier part.

Judgment is the ability to read a given situation, to interpret it, and to decide on the appropriate course of action. The man of judgment is the man who, when placed face to face with a certin set of circumstances, will at once recall similar circumstances, and rapidly note the points of difference between the previous and the present group of circumstances, and remembering the course of action which was adequate on the previous occasion, will quickly decide whether it be adequate on the present occasion or whether it needs to be modified and how. It stands to reason when that judgment depends on the richness and variety of previous experience, on one's having at command a store of elements from which to select for comparison, and it is evident that richness and variety of experience are gained only in the course of time, judgment cannot well be the possession of young men. It is judgment that distinguishes the seasoned man from the novice, and it cannot be acquired from

study of textbooks and formulas, but only from experience.

Thus far I have spoken only of mental qualities, but I wish to add a word about the moral qualities. The picture implied in the current conception of life is that of a hill with its upward and downward slopes. From youth to middle age we ascend, then reach the top, and after that descend. Our step becomes faltering and heavy on the downward slope —memory fails, the complexion is marred with wrinkles, the fair outline of the form is shrunken or passes into shapeless obesity, the mind relaxes, and at last we totter and stumble into a hole at the bottom of the hill, which men call the grave. This is the current conception. Instead of that, the conception which I would present is that of a series of terraces, each higher than the last. From age to age, through ascent following on ascent, rising from power to power, from glory to glory, at last we do not stumble into a hole, but pass as it were into the open heaven.

If even a brief view of the mental life of man has given some countenance to this daring pictorial innovation, yet it is on the moral life that I chiefly found my conception; for morally we become, or may become, better from year to year, from period to period.

Old age is friendly to moral development in various ways. In the first place, the dogs of passion cease to bark; the fever that has burnt so long

abates. As Sophocles replied, when commiserated on his extreme age, seeing that he could no longer enjoy the pleasures of youth: "On the contrary I believe that old age is my friend in that it has liberated me from a vicious and savage master who has disturbed my peace." By this vicious and savage master he meant the carnal appetites. Old age means peace. It is also friendly to a kind of disinterestedness. It is apt to free us from that other despot, the selfish self, and to induce broader interest in children and children's children; to enhance our ability of entering vicariously into the pleasures and sufferings of others.

But there is another reason why old age is depreciated, namely, that we do not seriously enough believe the oft-repeated dictum that "being is more than doing." Old age is the time of being, while middle age and youth are the time of doing, and if one takes seriously the thought that being is more than doing, he will appreciate that in this respect old age is more valuable than youth. But as a rule we only confess with the lips that this is true, while we really rate people according to the things they accomplish.

Doing is indeed important, but only in so far as a man becomes something in the course of his doing, the doing being the matrix that shapes the being. All our doing is worthless of itself. In the sight of infinity what are the fortunes we accumulate, the bridges we build, the books we write? What do all these doings signify, these tracings on the beach

which the waves of eternity will obliterate? They are as nothing except as they react upon us and make us something.

The spiritual life is engendered in us through doing, but is manifested in being; this is the point of view upon which the honor and appreciation of old age depend. If we take this view, old age will appear as the time when one can become beautiful inwardly, realizing an inner worth. The aged may become radiant presences in our households. By their freedom from disturbing passions, their unselfish, vicarious joys and pains, the fine irony with which they treat their wrinkled faces and shrunken bodies, they can win an inner worth, a refinement of spirit which makes them beautiful in our eyes.

We enter upon life thinking of the whole of it as our prospective estate; after a while we diminish our claim, we select a specialty; and then within the specialty a still narrower field, a specialty within the specialty; then we take our places as workers; and then after a time we withdraw, and more and more withdraw from life, until we have left its activities behind us. The whole of life is a succession of withdrawals and renunciations, and each new renunciation, if it be accomplished in the right spirit, adds a little to our inward worth, a line of spiritual beauty to our souls. It is calmness and peace, the lulling of the passions and freedom from them, the liberation from the persistent thought of self and the ability to identify one's self with the young life that is grow-

ing up around us, and to get new youth, as it were, by that identification—it is these things that make one finer. The outer shell decays, but the inner self does not decay. The outer garment becomes threadbare and rent, but the soul looks out from behind those hollow eyes and the mask of the wrinkled face, —the soul intact, the center of life, more concentrated, more luminous than in the prime of vigor.

I say this is possible. I do not say it must be so. There are plenty of old men who are no better than old fools. Many there are who decline and decay, and become miserable and fretful and more and more intolerable to others. Some time ago I gave an address on suffering, and an eminent physician criticized my assertion that suffering sweetens men, saying that he, in his experience, had found that suffering sours people. I do not dispute the fact that suffering often sours; I merely contend that it is within our power to have it otherwise. We have the power to make ourselves or to mar ourselves.

And perhaps the greatest of all the means of giving refinement and spiritual beauty to one's life, paradoxical as it may seem, is to do with the greatest zeal the little than we can do. This sounds contradictory to what I have just said in disparagement of doing, except as it reacts on being. Why do the little that remains with the greatest zeal? Because by persisting in doing the little we illustrate the highest quality in us, the willingness to serve. Just as a little child when it comes to you with the gift it has made, pleases you because of its intention,

pleases because of the loving spirit in its little loving heart, though the gift itself be worthless—a little kindergarten weaving, an impossible pen-wiper—the gift does please and warm your heart, because it shows the intent to please—so, when we approach old age, we can still place our gifts upon the altar, and thereby show our intent to serve, which is more than the service, and our faith and trust in the power in things that will make perfect our imperfections.

I admire the scholar in the prime of life, whose books are on the shelves of every library, and whose name is on every tongue; but I revere more the spent scholar, who uses the little daylight that remains to add some last slight contribution to the stock of knowledge. I revere him more, though I may admire the other more. There is nothing more pathetic and nothing more beautiful than this persistent bringing of one's little gift. I admire the great industrial worker who moves the world forward: I revere the spent and worn-out worker who insists upon remaining in harness, not because he believes that he will drop by the way if he gives up work, but because he would lend his little strength toward pulling the car of progress forward. I admire the man and woman, in whatever station, who, with a smile on their faces, persevere in doing their little best, not because they fail to perceive that it is little, but because they so love the best.

There is to me no more affecting passage in Homer's "Odyssey" than those communings between husband and wife, when at last, after twenty years

of separation, they stood face to face with each other in the silence of the wedding chamber. In those first communings, the man and the woman who had had twenty years of their married life cut out, spoke with one another of what was left of life; and the man told her of the trials that still remained, yet expressed the hope that at the last there might be peace. And Penelope replied in the melodious phrase which Homer has lent her: "If indeed it is true that the gods can so transmute old age that it shall be the best thing, then indeed will there be a final escape for men from all their evil. Yes, if it is true that the gods can so transform old age that it shall be the best age, then indeed the whole of life will lie before us like a great white road, and the last years —the years of decay—also will be blest, for on them also the sunshine lies."

It is this audacious undertaking that I have attempted in the name of the gods this morning, to transmute old age so that it shall seem the best age, so that it shall seem the last terrace of the terraces, the height of heights, the topmost summit, from which men can gaze into the open sky.

We live in a time in which old people are not considered as they ought to be. We have forgotten what the privileges of old age are, and the lessons which old age can teach; and worst of all the aged themselves often accept this opinion of themselves, as mere cumberers of the earth, creatures whom it were better to shelve. The change must come first

in the feeling of the aged themselves. They must put forward their claim to the honor which is their due, for their own sake, and the sake of human society. "Before the grey head thou shalt rise," says the Bible. Where honor and regard are denied to the old, the tenderest pieties of life are apt to be slighted and the delicate bloom of morality is rudely brushed aside. Even in those cases when the extreme of old age is reached, even when the last stage of feebleness sets in, even when the mental spark barely glimmers, if it glimmers at all, even there, where nothing remains, or almost nothing, of the former pride of manhood—even there, the love and the regard should remain. We are still bound by every feeling of gratitude to remember the source out of which we have sprung, and the benefits that have been so lavishly bestowed upon us; we are still obligated by every feeling of humanity that is in us to approach with holy reverence the shrine from which the god has departed, and to cherish and respect the human ruin over which hangs with a solemn lingering beauty the glory of other days.

III

WOMAN'S SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE IN MARRIAGE

A RADICAL illusion that often leads to shipwreck in marriage is the assumption that marriage is a state of which mutual happiness, instead of mutual training, is the object; training, indeed, under the most felicitous conditions where the choice has been fortunate, but training in any case. The illusion consists in supposing that we are to enjoy each other's perfections in a state of delight, keen and rapturous at first, milder but still marked later on, instead of our regarding marriage as a state in which, through the influence of the sex nature, in the nobler view of it, on either side, we are to win from one another such adumbrations of perfection as finite humanity is capable of.

But let me try to be more explicit as to the essence of this educative process. What is it, we ask, that woman can contribute toward the development of man, and conversely? I am not now speaking of the woman outside the home, the woman in the professions. It is said that one-eighth of the total number of women remain celibate, but seven-eighths do not. I am here concerned with those whose life is spent within the home, but whose interests assuredly

should not, therefore, be restricted to the home, whose mental outlook should embrace the whole of life. I am concerned with wifehood and motherhood, in respect to which the demand is becoming more and more exigent that it be considered as a true vocation. Now a vocation is an occupation which is dedicated to a specific social service, and is pursued with an understanding of the principles which are involved in that service. Are wifehood and motherhood capable of becoming a vocation in this sense? The presence of the child is the capital fact; the purpose of human marriage, as distinct from the joinings of the lower organisms, is to perpetuate the spiritual life upon earth in its human vehicles, and not only to perpetuate, but enhance it from generation to generation. Even when the child is subnormal, the task of the parents should be to bring it up as far as possible to the level of the normal, to advance it farther than it could possibly reach if left without their scrupulous care. But in the case of normal children the object is so to evoke their spiritual possibilities as to bring mankind forward, in them, a step beyond the attainment of the past. And in order to enhance the spiritual life of offspring it is necessary to enhance the spiritual life of the father and mother. It is spirit that acts on spirit; it is the personality that evokes personality. It is the atmosphere created in the home—it is what a man and a woman are in process of *becoming* that tells. It is their life that makes its silent but searching appeal to the hidden life in the young. The aim

of the woman in marriage, then, should be to call out the distinctive personality of the man, and the converse applies to the man, with a view to eliciting by their action and reaction on one another, the personal qualities that are latent in their offspring.

Let me elaborate somewhat what I mean. Every occupation has an ideal and a commonplace side to it. It may be carried on in a lofty or in a mean spirit. The ideal side turns out to be in every case the social side. The influence that woman at her best can bring to bear upon man is to *socialize him* in his work, to give him the vision and the incentive to follow his calling, not in a detached way, but in such a way as to do justice to its broad reactions on the life of society. Woman at her best is the guardian, I had almost said the incarnation, of the social spirit. I do not mean merely that she excels as a social worker, although she does that—social settlements in the main are carried on by women. But in a larger sense I conceive that woman is the representative of the social spirit, or rather of the cosmic principle of unity which in the human sphere we call the social spirit. The social spirit has a cosmic background. Goethe took account of this when he penned his famous eulogy on the divinifying influence of woman. In Revelation we read of the woman who is "clothed with the sun." At her best she *is* a sun; she exercises that kind of attractive force which creates a system out of the lives that revolve about her. Her special office, if the paradox be al-

lowed, is to stand for the general point of view, for life in its wholeness. She is the factor of integration in human society as man chiefly is the factor of differentiation.

Every calling can be regarded in a detached way, and that is the commonplace way of looking at it. Owing to the excessive specialization and subdivision of labor it is apt to be the man's way. He is prone to think of his calling as a means of private gain. Or, if he takes a somewhat more unselfish view, he will seek to promote the isolated interests of his calling—the medical, the legal, the artistic—but still without having regard to the reactions of his calling on society as a whole. This latter is the truly social point of view.

For example, the narrow view of business is that of the merchant or manufacturer who, while rendering a certain service to society, is interested predominantly in the pecuniary profit which he can derive from it. To him, the profit is the product, the service the by-product. But from the social standpoint the opposite is the case. While the merchant is entitled to a living, and will almost inevitably, if he renders a valuable service, obtain it, the service itself is that which should count in his total life as a human being. And it is the claim of the total life that the woman should urge.

Further, the service involves not only honest values in the product, but respect to the human factors engaged in the work of production. The social service rendered by an enlightened person in business

to-day, the service to others and to his own higher self, consists in his contriving to come into human relations with the human beings who work with him and under him. And one of the indispensable prerequisites of such relations is that the employer of human beings should actually know the conditions in which they live. In this respect the wife of the employer has a great and beneficial rôle to play. She can be on the social side of his calling not only an inspirer, a revealer, aiding him by her vision, but an active helper and sharer of his moral obligations toward his employees. The lady of leisure, according to the aristocratic tradition, is supposed to be far removed from the dust of business. The chivalrous husband may not intrude upon her things so vulgar as business cares. This false ideal, while it still lingers, is rapidly passing away. The influence of the woman who is married to an employer should be to aid him in developing excellence beyond that which he originally possessed by emphasizing the social side of his calling. Could there be the child-labor that exists in this country to-day if the wives of employers realized that it is their special function to see, and help the men to see, the social side of their calling?

The same is true in regard to all other professions. Every one has both a social and a detached aspect. The social demand on the lawyer of to-day is that he shall beware of commercializing his profession. The demand is for a higher ethical code

within the profession, in the relation of the lawyer to his clients, but also, and much more insistently, for a higher ethical conception of the relation of the lawyer to legislation. For his is the prerogative and the obligation to bring together those often mutually repugnant elements, the social conscience and the hard and fast legal machinery, so as to make the latter more flexible to the social conscience, quicker to follow its abiding impulses, more prompt to mirror its increasing light. The wife of the lawyer to-day at her best is no longer to be a person too ignorant or too indifferent to comprehend the problems with which her husband has to deal. She may not and need not be a legal expert. It is her special function to stand for the general point of view, and were she lost in the intricacies of detail she could not perform this function. But the demands of the social life, on the one hand, and the large principles of the law on the other, she should be able to master. She should hold the torch that guides the expert, overweighted as he is apt to be by his expert knowledge, on the upward way.

In medicine the social side, that is, the point of union between the aims of the profession and the life of the community, is being emphasized as never before. The profession of the physician seems to be undergoing an evolution in three directions: greater attention to the influence of psychic conditions on bodily health and disease, greater attention to the hygienic and sanitary prevision in order to forestall

disease, and far greater attention to the social condition of the majority of the poor who throng the dispensaries for relief.

Again, the religious teacher to-day often has an agonizing problem to solve. He is bound to teach the truth as he sees it, even after a change of conviction, but he may also have to consider the needs of a family dependent on him, the time-honored traditions of his church and friends whom he may grieve by an avowed change of belief. Here again it is the social side of the calling that marks out the ideal side. I refer to the incalculable social value in a community of men who are known to be absolutely sincere in the matter of religious belief. They purify the spiritual life of the whole of society. And a wife, she who has to endure the sacrifices consequent upon her husband's steadfast sincerity, can bring her best womanhood to bear by encouraging and supporting the man who chooses the hard but ennobling alternative. Many a woman has acted thus in such a situation, and saved the soul of the man whose business it is to save souls.

These are illustrations of the service which woman at her best renders to man, in virtue of the cosmic principle of which she is the vehicle; and a man in a sense repays this service, when at his best, by enlarging her mental horizon, strengthening her mental grasp, by infusing greater intellectuality into her love, so that it shall be not a mere glowing fire, emitting heat without light, but a radiant thing that illumines even while it imparts vital warmth. It is

said that women are interested in persons and not in abstract ideas or general principles. This may be true at present, but if so it is a tendency to be corrected; women need to apprehend general situations and principles if they are to exercise the socializing function that has been described. They need to have a large outlook on society. They need to be well grounded in the general principles of economics, of social science, of history, besides receiving at least a general training in the physical sciences, and in literature, psychology and the like. The largest foundation in culture is indispensable to a woman who would be not only a sunny presence, but a central, solar influence in her environment.

It has been said that woman is, as a rule, incapable of taking into account more than a few persons; that she is disposed excessively to narrow the circle within which she lives and moves, and, in connection with this trait, that she is a born conservative, opposed to innovation of any kind, in religion, in manners, customs, etc. For all that is finest and most genuinely womanly in her craves for harmonious relations, and innovation of any kind threatens to break up the harmonies of life. If this be so, it follows that she needs to be subjected to the reaction upon her of the more adventurous and aggressive spirit of man, who at his best seeks ever to encounter or create the new, in order that she, in turn, may be impelled to open out the circle of her interests more largely, to enrich and diversify the elements which she undertakes to compose and reconcile.

I have thus far spoken of the woman in relation to the calling of the man. Is she then to be a mere onlooker, a mere critic? If she were that, a critic in the sense in which poetry is said to be a criticism of life, her ministry would surely not deserve to be disparaged in comparison with those who are engaged in the actual struggle of life! It is a curious provincialism to imagine that only he is a doer who brings things to pass in palpable fashion, as if the bricklayer or mason were a more real doer than the architect who creates the design. If woman were simply the critic, her office would be not negligible, but, on the contrary, sublime. She would rank with the poet, only that in virtue of her keen interest in the man and the child, she would be sketching the ideal of particular lives, she would be writing the poetry of particular persons.

But indeed she also takes an active part, she also has a definite calling—always has had, and always will have. I have said that every relation in life should be educative; it should be added that there are a great many different kinds of educators. There is the school teacher, the professor in the college, the lecturer, the teacher of music. All of these have to do with the training of some one faculty, or set of faculties. Even in the school, though we aim to train the whole child, we never can arrive at doing so without the coöperation of the home, if only for the reason that the whole child is not in evidence in the school, only a part of the day being set aside for school experience, and only a part of the child's life

being uncovered to the eyes of the teacher. It is the privilege of the woman, the mother, to be the one all-round educator of the next generation. The whole child in infancy is in her charge, and later it is for her to select the right school, to see to it that her individual child is not sacrificed to the exigencies of the school mechanism, that the life outside the school and in the school are made concordant. She is to see to it that all the rays of influence that reach the child shall converge upon a single purpose, the awakening of the soul, the development of a distinctive and worthy personality in the child.

And later on this spiritual office still remains hers. Childhood passes into adolescence, the years of adolescence also pass—how quickly! and presently there is a family of adults, and with each new stage of development new mental and moral problems arise among the constituents of the family: the problems of adolescence, the problems of early manhood and womanhood. New discords break through also; possibly there appear strains of heredity latent before. In any case, the characteristic service of the woman is still, and more than ever, in demand. Her function does not cease with child-rearing, when so-called education is finished, so that she were then at liberty to give her entire attention to politics and the clubs. She is still needed as a solar influence in the home. Her special office is still that of using insight, and supreme interest in the actual personalities encircling her, to totalize the lives subject to

her sway, to resolve the discords, nay, to utilize them as great composers do, in order by the deft management of contrasts to create a nobler music.

I do not ignore the essential participation of the father. Both parents jointly are responsible and effectual, but in respect to that unity of life of which I have been speaking the part of the woman seems to me predominant.

There is one other point touching the relation of husband and wife that I should like to add. Marriage, when rightly undertaken, with a right view of its purpose, becomes a school of moral optimism. The shadows fall on the way of life; the fogs rise; the clouds thicken. Adversity suddenly approaches, and offers herself as a companion on the road. Bereavement, perchance, takes away the flower of the flock; or, worse still, there is a so-called black sheep in the family, and the hopes that were staked on a young life are miserably defeated. Then by all the deep affection we bear to one another are we impelled to console and uplift, to seek to see the silver lining of the cloud, that we may show it to our comrade. And as only the truth will answer, we are constrained to rise to such spiritual heights as to dispel the mists that impede our own vision, in order that we may actually see the silver lining, the light beyond the darkness—and to the spiritual eye there is always a light beyond the darkness. And thus marriage becomes a means of most exalted spiritual enlargement, an incentive to sane and sound opti-

mism, to the end that we may enthuse the strain of optimism into the depression at our side which we cannot bear to witness, and lift the cloud that has settled on one beloved head.

IV

THE REVOLT AGAINST CONVENTIONAL MORALITY

THE world is certainly at present in a strange way. The younger people especially are troubled and perplexed, and seem to the onlooker to be drifting rather wildly in respect to moral opinions and conduct. But it is not a question of young people only. Some of the most extreme revolters in morals to-day are older persons. In Drinkwater's play "Mary Stuart" it is the older man from whose lips drips the gospel of immoralism. The young man, the husband, is devoted to his wife, refusing to share her affections with a friend whom he has introduced into the house, and the older man lectures him on the greatness of so-called inclusive love. It is he who brings up Mary Stuart as an example of the *great* lover. The point is that at the present time two streams are converging: the natural radicalism of the young, whose privilege it is to desire novelty (the world would not get on very well if there were not this desire among the young; it is a needed protest against what is unsound, decayed, decrepit in the traditions—and there is always a great deal of that in what is handed down from the past) and besides there is also the general unsettle-

ment of ideas among older people. The two factors combine—the radicalism of the young, and the unsettlement of ideas in the community at large.

Now "the revolt against conventional morality" is the phrase of the revolters themselves, for it is the thing which they call conventional morality that they repudiate. And a first question I would ask them is whether they mean to do away with the things that are conventional in the traditional morality, the things that are just conventional, and nothing more—whether it is these that they want to get rid of, or whether they have come to think that morality itself is nothing more than a convention, that morality as such must be discarded.

It will be well, for clearness' sake, to define the word we are using, the word *convention.* What is a convention? It is an agreement without intrinsic justification, deriving its force wholly from the fact that people have somehow agreed to observe it. They might as well have agreed to observe something else. For instance, a certain legal phraseology used in drawing up contracts is a convention. It has been agreed to use this terminology in order more carefully to distinguish between a binding contract and a verbal understanding. But a wholly different phraseology might equally serve. Also the seal affixed to a contract is a matter of convention. But a contract itself is not a convention, far from it. A contract between two merchants is a pledge by one to do a certain thing on condition that the other in his turn will do a certain thing. The

essence of the contract is faith-keeping, promise-keeping. That is not a convention. That your word should be as good as your bond is a moral principle. Here plainly you have a difference between morality proper and convention.

I go further and say that even mere conventions often have a moral interest connected with them, are indirectly subservient to moral ends. The criterion which I offer to distinguish between a conventional act and a moral act, is that the former is not intrinsically binding, and could be replaced by some other mode of behavior more or less arbitrary, while a moral act is justified in its own right. At the same time, I add, even mere conventions are not always to be belittled, even conventional acts may be worth while because, though in themselves meaningless, they serve or symbolize a moral idea. An example is salutation by lifting the hat, by bowing the head. The idea is to show respect. One might show respect in different ways. In some countries they place the hand on the heart, a more poetic manner of salutation, but the idea is the same. Shaking the hands on meeting a friend or acquaintance is another example. The proverbial visitor from another planet, who had never seen such a performance as handshaking might consider it extremely ridiculous. One person stretches forth an arm, and with the extremities of it grasps the extremities of another person's arm, and the two being joined produce a certain vibration. How absurd! What connection is there between the thing done and the idea in-

tended? Why should shaking another person by the neck be a sign of hostility, and shaking his hand a sign of friendliness? No matter why. It is a convention, and it is not worth while to quarrel with it, though in the case of public officers like the President of the United States it may at times become an extremely inconvenient convention.

Young people, adolescents, are often needlessly troubled as to the truthfulness of observing these general social understandings. "Is it honest," they say, "to use the expression 'How do you do?' "— intimating thereby a desire to be informed as to the welfare of a person to whom one is really quite indifferent; or to say "I am pleased to make your acquaintance" when the feeling of pleasure may be quite absent? Such phrases, however, are current coin in social intercourse; they have rubbed off their literal meaning, but still have a certain utility as a means of showing respect, or as indicative of the way one ought to feel towards other people even if one does not.

The curious circumstance is that the young, who are so insistent against convention, are themselves the most conventional people in the world. There is nothing so conventional as a company of young persons. Even their unconventionality is a convention. Young girls smoke cigarettes or imitate the dress of men on the plea of convenience, perhaps, though that is often a mere pretext, the reason being that it is the most recent fashion or convention to

efface as far as possible the distinction between the two sexes. Sometimes these unconventional proceedings go to great lengths, as when the vices of men are imitated, young girls joining in vulgar carousals or taking part in dances which serve to stimulate sensual excitement.

Again, a mere convention may be a useful safeguard which should be observed by those who do not need it for the sake of those who do. The chaperon at entertainments, for instance, is objected to because her presence seems to imply that the young people cannot take care of themselves. But one must remember that when we speak of the young we are speaking of different ages and different grades. And certainly it is a fact that some of those whom we call the young people cannot take care of themselves without assistance. Have you had the opportunity that some of our lawyers have to know the secret history of very good families and of their daughters? The fact, I repeat, is that some of these young people do not take care of themselves. They are not strong enough to be placed in situations where the hot blood of youth is unduly tempted, while others no doubt are strong. And those who are, it seems to me, should be willing to countenance certain restrictions which, though not required for themselves, are indispensable for the weak. The old-fashioned chaperon is not in my mind. What I am thinking of is self-government. Self-government is the best plan. When young people get together they should adopt their own rules

and see to it that they are followed, but it is still prudent that an older person should often be present to lend support to those rules.

At the same time there are conventions that ought to be abolished. In what is called "society" it has been the convention to keep the young woman, the so-called "sheltered" woman, in a kind of hot-house atmosphere. She must not do any useful work. She is expected to live the idiotic life of pleasure, to give chief attention to her apparel, to the ritual of social calling, and the like. All this empty, hollow life is being discountenanced, and rightly. The war especially had a very beneficent effect in summoning women, younger and older, to active service, and it is likely that its influence in this respect will be lasting. Here, then, we have an example of a conventional notion that society is well rid of, to the profit of all concerned.

But now I come to the main point. Is it true that essential morality itself, that the moral principles are conventions, that they have no justification in themselves, that the world only observes them, in so far as it does observe them, because there has been an agreement to that effect?

When Macbeth after the murder cries out, "Sleep no more. Macbeth does murder sleep," is that cry an expression of the annoyance he felt because he had broken a convention? Or when Cain, the first murderer, shuddered at his ghastly deed, did the sense of guilt which sent him forth a fugitive over

the earth arise out of the consideration that respect for human life is a useful convention? And if some moral principles, some moral laws such as that against murder, are grounded in intrinsic right and reason, had we not better pause and ask whether there may not also be other principles and laws which have the same warrant, instead of dismissing morality *in toto,* as an arbitrary affair, as some persons nowadays are inclined to do? It is true that there are different types of morality, and this has misled not a few modern writers into thinking that morality has no solid ground to stand on since what is right at one time and among one people may often be considered wrong at a different stage of development and among a different people. There is one kind of morality, it has been said, for the temperate zone, and another for the tropics, and men can change their morality as they do their garments. But this is a superficial observation which ignores the striking fact that among all peoples and at all times there has been a sense that some things are right and that other things are wrong. In other words there has been a sense of rightness, however dark may have been the interpretations of unenlightened peoples as to what is right and wrong. And in the second place the sounder moral judgments of the present day in the more advanced communities are not to be upset by summoning as witnesses against them the backward moral opinions and practices of former ages, or of the quasi-primitive tribes such as still exist in different parts of

the globe. There has been advance in ethical science just as there has been in physical science. And just as the astronomy of Newton is not rendered invalid or insecure by comparing it with the astronomy of the Chaldeans, or the medical practice of Pasteur by comparing it with the practice of the Indian medicine man, so the best moral insight of the present time is not invalidated, is not shaken in its authority, by all the mass of evidence which the anthropologists and ethnologists have dug up as illustrative of the variety of moral opinions and moral practice among the members of the human race.

The certainty of a scientific law does not depend on the unanimous consent of all mankind. A scientific law may actually be understood, as to the grounds upon which the demonstration of it rests, by a mere handful of scientists. Its certainty nevertheless is unimpeached when those who are competent to understand it approve it, when the results that have been won by experiment are ratified by those who are capable of repeating the experiment. And in like manner morality, or the art and science of harmonizing human relations, depends for the validity of its generalizations, and of the principal rules that flow from them, upon the approbation of those persons who understand the terms of the various moral problems, and who experimentally in their own experience test the solutions.

A precious fund of experience has indeed been accumulated in the past in regard to these subjects, a fund which must not be lightly cast aside. One

at least of the difficulties in the way of real moral advance to-day is the tendency—and it is naturally noticeable among the young—to belittle the past, to treat society as if it were wax to be molded at will by every zealous reformer. This tendency I do not share. I believe that our affiliation with the past may not be disrupted. I believe that the good content in the tradition which our predecessors have handed down to us must be preserved, but at the same time I am thoroughly convinced that the *good which we have inherited from the past can only be preserved if it be recast, reinterpreted, presented in forms suited to present needs—in brief, if the good is thus transmuted into the better.*

Now I should like to make an application of this thought to certain outstanding subjects which are in debate between the younger and the older generation. The first of these is the subject of authority, more particularly of parental authority. Should the idea of authority be preserved? I say, yes. Should it be reinterpreted? I say likewise, yes. The young rebels are perfectly right when they object to a certain kind of authority. They are perfectly wrong when they dismiss the notion of authority altogether. They are then spilling the wine with the lees. One party, the standpatters, insist on the lees; the other party, the rebels, insist on the wine, but they spill the wine with the lees. Now, as to the family, what are the facts to-day? There is a change in the function of the family, and with it must come a change

in the kind of authority which the heads of the family may properly exercise. In the past, when society was stationary, the family was the organ by which the existing order was recruited—the fixed, unalterable places in it as they became vacant were filled. In the great families the object was to keep the estate intact, to hand it down from one generation to the next without change. In the guilds among the artisans the son stepped into the shoes of the father, was expected to follow exactly the same vocation as the father. Everything was so ordered as to keep things as they were, to keep the framework of society and its subdivisions immutable. Into one of these subdivisions the son must be fitted. If he showed a fondness for novelty, a will of his own, it was the duty of the parent to curb, to restrain, to reduce him to conformity. The aim of the family was to take the younger generation and fit them into the same mold that had been occupied by their seniors. To-day society is essentially progressive, and the change in the family corresponds to the change in society. The business of the family is to prepare its offspring to take part in the progress of society. The authority of the parent should be exercised in such a way as to prepare the youth for that vocation for which nature has fitted him and for sane and wise innovation. Authority should only be exercised with a view to its eventual extinction, with a view to putting the young into the way of independence, freedom. But a certain measure of authority in the early periods of life is indispensable

to this very end, and when wisely exercised will meet with no unwilling response.

The next subject in debate between the younger and the older generation arises from the desire of the younger generation to eat of the fruit of the tree. There is at present a realistic movement in manners and morals even as there is in art. Its aim is to embrace the whole of life. The younger generation to-day are intensely realistic. They are keen to know the whole of life, and especially that part which has been curtained off—the seamy side, the under side; they want to be as gods, knowing good and evil—especially evil. Not, let me hasten to add, because of any depraved inclinations on their part, but because of the realistic feeling that they must include in their knowledge the evil side of things. The theory that prevailed in the past was the reality theory as opposed to the realistic theory. It was held that there is a capital distinction between the abnormal and the normal, the accidental and the essential, the transient and the lasting, features of life, and that *reality* is reached by eliminating the abnormal, the accidental, the transient, and selecting for comprehension the typical, the essential, the permanent.

I believe strongly that the principle of elimination, or of reality, should be preserved, as against the tendency to promiscuous realism. I regard this principle as one of the invaluable good elements in the tradition which we have inherited. At the same

time I am perfectly aware that huge mistakes have been made in the process of elimination, that often the unessential has been selected, and the truly essential eliminated; and that if there is to be a new classicism in life as in art, the time is ripe for a thorough overhauling of the types of character and behavior set up as models, retaining, indeed as indispensable the principle that a selection must be made from the bewildering tangle of experiences which make up what we call life, but insisting no less upon a new insight as to what are the items to be selected.

Sex education, as proposed by its wisest advocates is an example of the better turn that things are now taking, though I wish it might be less negative, and that a positive ideal of noble relations in marriage might be made prominent.

And, if it be asked whether there is any general criterion that can be proposed as a guide in the process of selection, I should say that in my own case I have found most helpful the rule of leaving aside whatever does not feed my intelligence, whatever nutriment I cannot convert into *energy*. I find this a very helpful rule. The field of knowledge is so vast that one is simply lost if he tries to know all the things which it would be interesting to know. There is a vast difference between being interested in knowing and deriving power and energy from knowledge. There are many knowledges that merely minister to one's curiosity. And, if in addition one were to attempt to master the different arts, and to acquaint himself with the infinitely com-

plex facts of social behavior, he is sure to end by knowing so many things, or having a smattering of so many things, as in truth to know nothing, and also to be good for nothing. It is evident that no matter how realistic people may be in theory, in practice every one is forced to adopt the principle of selection, and I believe, as I have said, that a certain stern resolve to renounce whatever knowledge cannot be transmuted into energy is the best aid in selection.

Now this applies obviously, among other things, to the question whether one should eat of the fruit of the tree, whether it is desirable to know the seamy side, the under side, the crime side of life, to know the perversities, the abnormalities, etc. One cannot help knowing something of these things, enough and more than enough, in the ordinary routine of one's existence, but deliberately to seek them out is a grievous error, for the reason that the knowledge of these things is depressing, and instead of increasing energy has the opposite effect. I remember experiencing this kind of depression at the time when, as a member of the State Tenement House Commission, it was part of my duty to visit some of the lowest haunts of misery in the city of New York. The sights and scenes exhibited to my eyes have never ceased to haunt me since, have left a stain upon the mind—as if the mere knowledge of such degradation of the god-like form of man were itself a degradation. One cannot help coming in contact with evil, and I believe one cannot ever be

entirely immune to the contagious effects of it, if it be only in the way just indicated. But it is relatively safe to risk the encounter of moral as well as physical evil if one does so in the course of the endeavor to overcome, or at least to mitigate it. The physician, the social worker, are at least relatively immune.

Once more then I say to young people: Try to know life by all means, but do not mistake death for life. The course some of you are embarking on brings you into contact with corruption, with death, not with life.

V

THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENEMIES

TO live truly a man must date his life before the day of his birth as an individual. He must identify himself with mankind, think of himself as a disciple of Prometheus, and feel the fusion of his life with that great being, Humanity, which lives on through the ages. Consciously he must carry the past into his present. He should study history, not with any vain, impossible hope of knowing all the facts, but to achieve vital contact with those great moments in which humanity put forth a vital effort. Such contact is a spiritual impregnation. It communicates the contagion of effort.

Having thus risen, in thought and feeling, to the idea of humanity, he should choose a vocation that will enable him best to serve humanity. Not wealth, not fame, but the need of mankind, should be the supreme consideration in fixing his choice. What, from that point of view, is his place and function in the world?

And in all things, he should look to the end. Though the various lines of progress in science, in art, in technology, and the rest seem to be parallel, they nevertheless should converge towards a final

end in the spiritual life. Of that end the simplest expression is that a state of things shall exist on earth wherein the law of the jungle, of life subsisting on life, shall be replaced by that of life enhancing other life. Progress is thus to be conceived of as spiritual.

This, the master-thought that is to apply in all relations, gives us the key to the solution of the problem of how to act towards enemies. We must so treat them as to change them into factors of the spiritual progress of mankind, and in so doing effect a certain change in ourselves. It is no longer merely a question of our own individual attitude towards them. Something greater, the greatest thing of all, is involved, and that is the spiritual uplifting of humanity. We must make an entirely new departure in approaching the problem. From the point of view we have now reached we see the figure of Humanity awaiting its progress, that Promethean figure standing as a witness of the enmity between myself and my foe, and the fateful bidding of that figure as determining what should be our mutual attitude.

The enemy is an injurer, and against him who does me harm the raw instinct is for unstinted vengeance; to repay him not merely an equivalent, but multifold. It is not generally realized that the *lex talionis,* the law of retaliation, prescribing an eye (only) for an eye, a tooth (only) for a tooth, was a restraint on unbridled revenge. Experience begot prudence. Men came to see that of the vendetta there is no end, and that the blood feud is suicidal.

Then a loftier moral feeling reënforced the counsels of prudence, and stigmatized the ferocity of crude impulse. Thus in the Old Testament we find the injunction, "If thine enemy's ox be astray, do not rejoice, he being your enemy, that his beast is lost, but restore his property to him." Abstain from what the Germans call *Schadenfreude*—a word for which there is no exact English equivalent—meaning gladness at the loss of another. Elsewhere in the Old Testament there is proclaimed the law of requiting good for evil. You will thereby, as the Book of Proverbs says, heap coals of fire upon the head of him who has done you wrong; that is, make him burn with shame that he has injured one who proves to be his friend. Penetrating still more deeply is the warning in the Gospels, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Who are you to set up yourself as a critic? Are you guiltless? Are your hands so clean that you may presume to pronounce sentence, and by applying a strict standard to others challenge its application to yourself? The warning does not necessarily enjoin charity to the faults of others. It sharply awakens your sleeping conscience and makes you aware of your own.

Nobler and more admirable are those counsels of the great teachers who have inculcated actual love of enemies, of human injurers. Socrates says it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. Buddha went beyond that. In a book called "The Path of Virtue," he said, "Hatred is not healed by hatred at any time; hatred is healed by love," and adds, "This

is an old rule." The Sermon on the Mount more tenderly, and in extreme language, enforces the lesson which Buddha had taught more than five centuries earlier, and I propose to examine the Christian teaching of the forgiveness and love of enemies. What in it is sound, and what untenable?

On the face of it, the precept that a man shall love his enemies, goes against human nature. The man in the street is apt to brush it aside as an extravaganza, as a fantastic, visionary, and rather anemic teaching, or as Lord Birkenhead put it recently, as a precept never meant to be practiced, but intended only to create a sort of soft, sentimental atmosphere in a hard world, wherein, however, "stout arms and sharp swords" are still to be the instruments of men's wills. How, indeed, can you love what is hostile to you and unlovely? For example, how can you love a thief who takes your property; or a person who spreads malicious gossip about you; or a man who pays you starvation wages, while you perhaps are working the nails off your fingers to support an old parent, and then reduces your wages below even that pittance? If by loving your enemy be meant embracing him and showing him affection, that is impossible. But so to conceive it would be to misunderstand love. It is indeed contrary to human nature to love what is unlovely; but what is meant by the commandment to love your enemy is just this: that in that hostile person, who revolts you, there is something which is not unlovely.

In him, too, there is to be presumed a divine spark capable of being fanned into a purer flame; the invincible, the inextinguishable possible of the better, of the best. And if you believe in the real presence of that deeper nature, you can reach over the outer hideousness and see the thing that is hidden there, the latent fire of good. A man is what he sees. If you have the strength to pass beyond the forbidding, the repulsive, outer wall, if you have the gift to look within, you will thereby be changed and elevated in your own nature. In overcoming the anger and disgust of your first recoil something nobler has come to life in you.

This is the foundation on which is based the doctrine of loving your enemies, as it is termed. The word *loving,* I have said, has misleading associations; it suggests putting one's arm around an enemy and being affectionate, whereas your love is for something lovely that is obscured by an outer repulsiveness, something that demands of you a self-overcoming if it is to be seen, and therewith a self-exaltation. It is a vision that follows a victory.

And when a man is actually hurting you and seems a very incarnation of evil, that victory is difficult. If you are merely a spectator it is less so. But in the degree that you yourself suffer, the spiritual effort to see what is human glimmering far back in the soul of the being that is hurting you becomes more intense, and the effort is the more transfiguring, your victory the nobler.

When the tie of blood binds you to your injurer forgiveness may not demand so heroic an effort of self-overcoming. In one sense, indeed, you may feel more keenly the hurt inflicted on you by a brother or other relative than that which you suffer from a stranger. Perhaps a brother raised under the same roof with you did not visit you in sickness: he was too busy to come. Or there was a financial emergency in your affairs, and in your straits he left you to go to strangers for aid. And now the wheel turns. His own health has broken down; his fortune is in danger of ruin. Will you remember that he was your injurer, and desert him, or will you remember that he is your brother?

A son sent by you to college is wasting his time and his allowance in dissipation. Repeated warnings have not availed. He is now in debt and will be reduced to extremities unless you help him out, and the mother pleads once more—forgive, will you forgive?

What is forgiveness? To forgive is not to forget. It is *not to mention,* but does not therefore involve forgetfulness, or cancellation of the past. When you forgive a fault you do not cast it in the teeth of the person you have pardoned: but on neither side is there forgetting, and there should not be. To forgive is to throw a rope to one struggling in the water, and to enable him to come safe to shore. To forgive does not necessarily *follow* repentance. To forgive is so to act as to *induce* repentance; it is to show faith in the better side of the one who has done

the wrong, and by that evocative act of belief in his truer self, lead him to repent and to enter on the new way of living you have revealed to him. Then comes reconciliation, and reconciliation between the pardoned and the pardoner is a sacramental tie. It means that the one has fallen, and that the other has gone down into the depths of the valley of guilt and raised him and risen with him.

These preliminary considerations bring us to the doctrine of Jesus as to the forgiveness of enemies. In that teaching there are two points wherein I concur, and three at which I must diverge; and I wish to set forth without undue elaboration the points of agreement and of difference. First then, as to the respects wherein I am in accord.

Jesus teaches that if any one is in the grip of an enemy, suffering oppression without help and without hope, there are two things he can do. Being physically helpless, he can nevertheless rise to his feet ethically, spiritually, and save his self-respect, by realizing that in himself also there is something of that same evil strain which in the oppressor is injuring him. He can then lift himself above his foe by using his experience of wrong to purify his own nature, to expel from it that evil strain which he finds in himself, not in the same measure, perhaps, not so overtly, but yet existing. For the oppressed is ever apt to be the potential oppressor. The persecuted has it in him to be a persecutor, and the way by which he can attain to integrity, and

make even enmity serve the uses of the spiritual life, is to realize more profoundly how it hurts to be persecuted, and to cast out of himself the persecuting devil. Here I am in complete agreement with the Christian teaching.

The other point is that he should show his love for his enemy by his example, and lead the oppressor, too, to purify himself of the spirit of oppression. He will thus be the benefactor of his foe. He will thus fulfill the commandment, Do good to them that persecute you and revile you, and say all manner of evil against you; and bless them that curse you.

Human nature, raw, uneducated human nature takes another point of view. When we are hurt, we see only that; we are blind to the fact that we are potentially of the same kind as the wrongdoer. Yet it is true, and the truth is written large in history. When the Swiss wrested their independence from the Austrians, they promptly sought to impose the yoke on their neighbors. We read of nothing more inspiring than the heroic contest of the Dutch with Spain, their noble resistance to tyranny; but no sooner had they achieved their national independence than these same Hollanders began to exercise oppression in their own country. Among the Jews in Poland, before emancipation came, not a few of the rich Jews oppressed the poor Jews. This has ever been the case; there is in the persecuted something that is potentially persecuting. Jesus said, Behold, here is your chance. You feel in your flesh how it

hurts; realize, then, how it hurts any other whom you are disposed to hurt.

Turning to those aspects of the Christian teaching with which I cannot find myself in agreement, let us take first the saying, "If any one smite thee on the right cheek, present to him the other also; if any one take away thy coat, give him thy cloak also." Every unbiased reader feels the fine intent there, and yet must feel at once a movement of dissent. A critic like Nietzsche is of course incredibly on the wrong track when he speaks of the servility enjoined by this precept. Very evidently that is not the spirit of the injunction. On the other hand a crude literalism travesties it. I do not know whether a certain jeweler whose shop was attacked the other day was a Christian or not; but assume that he was and wished to live up literally to the precepts of the Master. The gunman took away twenty thousand dollars' worth; was it the jeweler's part to present the other cheek also, and offer an additional twenty thousand dollars' worth which the thief had overlooked? A reckless automobile driver has driven his machine over you, and crushed one of your limbs. Are you, as you lie there, to beckon the nearest bystander and suggest that the driver shall run his machine over the other limb also? The symbolism of the meaning is obvious in the crescendo statements of the precept. If any one takes your coat, give him your mantle also. If any man forces you to go a mile, go with him twain. If any one gives you a blow on the right cheek—a left-handed blow—turn the other

and let him strike you with the full force of the right hand also.

The symbolism enshrines the world view of many finer spirits of the age of Jesus: it expresses an otherworldliness which despairs of this world. The Sermon on the Mount was spoken to a people bowed beneath irremediable injustice. On them rested the crushing weight of the Roman rule. They could not hope by their own efforts to lift that weight, and the soul-sickness bred by the constant sight of corruption and violence made them weary of the world. The Roman power was then omnipotent. The clash of armies and the invasion of provinces seemed to have banished justice from the earth. Jesus and many others of the nobler spirits of the time turned with repulsion from it all, convinced that a superhuman change could not long be delayed. As in the days of Noah, God would repent of his creation, and destroy the earth, this time not with water, but with fire. All that was evil would perish in a mighty conflagration, something like that staged in the *Götterdämmerung*. But Jesus was ethically optimistic. After the old evil order had vanished in flame, there would be a renewal. A better world would follow miraculously; the Kingdom of Heaven would be established on earth for those who had rooted out of their nature all those evil desires and impulses which bind people to this baser world: the craving for wealth, the lust of sex, the impulse towards self-assertion. These were the fetters to be broken if one would enter the Kingdom of Heaven

on earth. Put off the natural man if you would put on the spiritual; and thereby gain admission to a supernatural world order here and now.

As to the sex relation, fornication is absolutely condemned, but even marriage is less commendable than celibacy. Why perpetuate this defiling thing, this rotten world; why not condemn in your own nature the source of all manner of corruption?

Behold, then, he said, you live here helpless in an evil world. How can I help you; can I urge and aid you to shake off the yoke of Rome? It is impossible. One course only is open to you, and that is to believe in the coming change, and to fit yourselves for living in that sweeter world by dying to this, by achieving indifference to all those things which are desired by people who cling to this life, creature comforts, self-assertion, and the effectuation of their own will. The meaning of the precept should now be clear. If you are in the grip of an enemy, your foe is one of the factors of this evil world. How can you escape? You cannot break the yoke, but you can use the opportunity to fit yourself and him for that better world. If he demands your coat, give him your mantle also. Be indifferent to the most elementary creature comforts. Show him that you have freed yourself from this pitiful craving for creature comforts, this quest for the material. Give him your cloak if he asks for your coat. If he strikes you, turn the other cheek; if he asks you to go with him a mile, go two; if he says, I will have my way, you shall not have yours, let him have his

way. For this desire of self-assertion to the suppression of others' wills is one of the most venomous seeds of corruption. Cleanse yourself of it, and in your indifference to this garment of flesh which is presently to pass away, show him that even a blow is no more to you than a puff of wind. You may no longer build your self-respect on what men think of you or do to you. You must establish it on that supernatural character which you are acquiring, and you must aid him to acquire that character also.

It is evident that there is a fundamental difference between the point of view of a religion of spiritual progress and the Christian standpoint. The religion of spiritual progress is not other-worldly. However dark may be the state of the world we are not allowed to abandon hope, to lose courage, to relinquish effort. We do not condemn the desire for wealth as an evil in itself; we condemn greed. We do not say that the love of man and woman is evil; we say that abominable incontinence is evil. We do not say that self-affirmation is evil; we say that self-affirmation at the expense of other wills is evil. We do not think of spirituality as the self-emptying of every natural impulse or desire; on the contrary, we affirm that spirituality consists in taking these as they come from the hands of nature, sublimating them, and so making them subserve the highest ends.

A second point of difference is that the Christian teaching takes account only of individual enmities, and not of group enmities. It is a defect of the

Christian ethic that it dealt only with the relation of person to person, not of group to group; and for this reason, while for many the Christian ideas have been an inspiration in the personal relations, they have left the public relations unpenetrated. We have thus the strange situation of an ethical doctrine that has contact ethically with just one important spot in life but stands apart, at an angle, away from the other parts of life.

Now it is these group enmities that we must deal with. Their magnitude and menace raise issues of life and death. Consider the case of the Jews of Eastern Europe, harried and ravaged by pogroms. There are more than eight million of Jews outside Palestine, and they cannot all go thither. Here it is not a question of the relation of individual to individual; it is the oppression of a group by an enemy group, inflamed by racial antipathy and religious prejudices imbibed in infancy. Or take the case of the blatant, truculent nationalisms that are springing up all over the world. In both instances also the religion of spiritual progress uses the method that Jesus prescribed, the method of self-searching and self-purification. In your nature as a group you have stuff in you such as is in your haters. You too have the spirit of racial antipathy and of blatant nationalism, though to recognize this is not to palliate or excuse Anti-Semitism, for example. Make use therefore of your hurt to ask whether you, too, are not prone to extravagant nationalism and to the *odium theologicum,* and strive

to purify yourself spiritually as a member of your group.

The colored people of the South are subject to the most unfair discriminations on account of their color; but it is said that there are similar discriminations in certain negro communities between the lighter-colored and the darker-colored members of the race.

Wage-earners complain of the unscrupulous employer, and the employer complains of the unscrupulous trade unions. Nobody would say that all employers are tyrannical. But that there are unscrupulous employers, none will deny, and having in mind that type, let us turn to the labor organizations, and the history of the relations of the craft unions between one another and to the masses of the unskilled workers. Is this history not replete with instances of similar unfairness and oppression as that to which the laborers as a body are exposed at the hands of hostile capitalists? The member of a group, therefore, besides considering his relations to other individuals, should make clear to himself what the tendencies of his group are, and if the group be oppressed, use that experience to clean house morally. It is not, of course, to every man that the spiritual rule appeals. But if a man who is treated like dirt beneath the feet of those in whose power he is helpless would reëstablish his self-respect and become morally elevated in his own eyes, he can only effect that by eliminating from himself the same evil that works in those who mistreat him.

Finally there is the most important point of divergence, and that is the conception of what is spiritual. For Jesus, as I have said, the spiritual nature of man is that which is purged of all earthward desire, cleansed of the impulses that attach men to this present world. In our view the spiritual is that which uses the natural impulses, seeing in them an opportunity of creating in human society the opposite of the law of the jungle. These very cravings and tendencies that point us to earth offer occasion to become functionally spiritual. Functional and spiritual, in the full sense of the words functional and spiritual, are to my mind interchangeable terms.

The functional ideal may be illustrated in industry, where the division and diversification of functions, as of managers, executives, organizers, scientific and technical experts, and the workers of various grades is so striking. Each of these persons has a distinctive function to perform. He does it spiritually if he so exercises his office, so fulfills the particular task allotted to him, as not to destroy or suppress the functional performance of others, but to facilitate and enhance it. And if in any field you are my enemy, my duty is to enlist you as a factor in the spiritual progress of mankind by pressing you to perform your function. My rôle is to side with what is functionally best in you, help to make it manifest, make it appear out of its hiding. And to that end I must try to form in my mind an image of how your function may be rightly performed, and

hold up that image before you. I must try to make you see the thing you ought to do and be, in industry or anywhere else. To bring into industry this larger spirit of team-work is to raise the stature of others and your own. The highest achievement of the head is to develop in those nearest to him, and through them in every member of the vocation, the will and the ability to do their part of the work better because of the particular way in which he is accomplishing his own task. But if the head is an enemy, an exploiter of his employees, then their duty to him, and their triumph over him, is boldly to proclaim his true function, to impel him to it, to win him for it, to induce him to put the dollar second and his function first.

Another example. The whites in the South are in advance of the negroes. It is their function to assist the more backward people not only in gaining an economic footing, but in catching up with civilization in the ordering of their family life and in the extirpation of crime. But at present many of the white people are acting in the very opposite way. They retard the formation of a family life among the ex-slaves by the licentiousness they permit themselves in their relations to negro women, by the degradation of the refined negro woman when she is required to associate with coarse men in the Jim Crow cars. While by treating the negro, the moment he is accused, and without proof, as if he were guilty, they prevent discrimination between guilty and innocent among the negroes themselves. In so

far as this is true, the whites are not discharging the functions of an advanced population towards a population backward through no fault of their own. What, in these circumstances, is the functional spiritual relation for the colored man? It is to see what the white man ought to be and to do, and to hold up to him, as in a mirror, the rôle he ought to play as a moral helper.

We are always losing sight of the tremendous fact that we tend to make of other people what we see in them. Not indeed absolutely and in every individual case, but in the long run, we make people behave as they ought to behave if we see how they ought to behave. To-day the great difficulty in dealing with oppressors is that the oppressed and their advocates are always protesting. Indignant spokesmen, the world over, are loudly declaring how men ought not to act. Injustice will decline by the vision of how things should be done, not by proclaiming how things should not be done. But few and rare are the noble ideals that shine out in the world as to how men ought to act rightly. In some instances we can speak with a certain confidence. In the greater number it is very difficult, requiring the labor of many minds that combine experience, knowledge of the facts, and ethical purpose to form a mental picture of the right spiritual relations between groups now hostile.

While we spend ourselves in protests against what should not be, we neglect to affirm the vital, eternal,

convincing mind-pictures of the way in which nations and lesser groups should act towards one another. The clamor of mere indignation is barren. The vision of what men should be and do holds rich promise for the future. The spirit of the religion of spiritual progress offers the redeeming message that we can make of our enemies functionaries in the world, and factors of spiritual development. The greatest boon we can confer upon a man is to impel him to what he can best do, and what it is most honorable for him to do; and hence the rule I commend to the oppressed and injured in the world is that they take sides with their enemy. That gospel will give a new turn to the labor struggle, to the strife of the many against the few, of the physically weak against the physically or intellectually strong. The oppressor, I have said, is also the suppressor. He suppresses in himself something infinitely worth while. *Take sides, therefore, with your enemy and not against him;* take sides with the oppressor, not in so far as he is an oppressor, but in so far as he is a suppressor, take sides with that in him which he suppresses. Make him see how he wrongs himself when he wrongs you. In siding with what is best in him against what is worst, you will experience in yourself also a profoundly transforming change.

Flattery as commonly understood is a detestable thing. It plays on the foibles of others for its own ends. But there is a righteous kind of flattery which makes people think better of themselves than

they ever dared to think, and makes them aware of possibilities they have suppressed or have never explored. Flattery of that kind we should use both to our friends and to our enemies. In friends too we should see some excellence unseen by them, or neglected, or suppressed, bring it to their knowledge and make it more real to them by our perceiving it. We must be flatterers, righteous flatterers both of our friends and enemies, and we shall find that that kind of flattery is in the long run irresistible.

VI

THE STRAIN BETWEEN THE OLDER GENERATION AND THE YOUNGER

STRAINED relations between older and younger persons, between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, are often due to pronounced temperamental differences, since Nature in her sardonic mood sometimes binds together in the tie of consanguinity the most uncongenial dispositions. David, as narrated in the Bible, suffered more from the son whom he loved than from any of his enemies. And the first parents even had the terrible grief of bringing up their eldest son to be the murderer of the younger. Maladjustments in families, then, between the senior and junior members, have been and are of quite frequent occurrence.

But the problem to-day is larger. A certain chasm seems to have opened between the older and the younger generation in general. A main cause would seem to be *the presumption in favor of the latest as the best, the newest as the truest.* This is deeply ingrained in the mental habit of our age. At a time when society was stationary, old men were regarded as the repositories of ancient wisdom and were accordingly esteemed. But in a forward-urging time like ours, young, vigorous, alert men come to the

front. Men who are abreast of the most recent information are the leaders. In science, for instance, the latest theories supplant their predecessors. The textbooks of ten or even five years ago are already obsolete. It is Einstein, not his great predecessors, who holds the attention of the physicist.

Everywhere, not only in science and in the technical arts, the refashioning spirit is abroad, the mood of disallowance of what has been handed down is prevalent. And among younger persons especially, whose desire it is to keep abreast of the times, the prejudice in favor of every innovation is strong, even if, unlike scientific theories or new mechanisms, the innovation is far from being demonstrably an improvement.

Thus in education, the innovating spirit has gone so far as not only to scrape off the barnacles from the ship and to replace worm-eaten timbers, but even to eliminate the steering-gear, on the principle, one must suppose, that a vessel which drifts is more in tune with its environment of winds and waves than one that is guided by the compass. The educational ship to-day is indeed more brightly painted than ever before, and much that was decayed in it has been scrapped—but the gallant bark is drifting nobly, nobody knows whither. It is the Montessori method, or the misnamed Organic method, or some other most recent method, that is acclaimed in virtue of its recency. Always the method, but hardly a word about the end, the purpose! It is unnecessary to mention the many novelties and vagaries

that are being introduced in painting and music and poetry. Here the general tendency is toward the solution of form, with emphasis on endless varieties in expression. Doubtless such of these changes as are mere aberrations will pass away, and in education and in the fine arts and in life too, there will, we may hope, be a new classicism, new binding forms will be discovered which shall include the riches that are garnered up by the insurgents and innovators.

I speak of these things, however, only to indicate how the passion for the recent reacts on the respect or want of respect that is shown to the older generation. Older persons seem belated stragglers, lingerers on the way, long outdistanced by the fast moving throng. They are apt to be regarded as more or less backward intelligences, interesting perhaps like geological specimens whose place is in a museum. Or, to put the thought more gently, Time, in flying past them, scattered the white dust from its pinions on their heads, and the same white dust of age has also descended on their minds. Hence, if they may still claim an outward deference, and are not actually to be shelved, it is more from the remembrance of what they once were than from regard for any vital significance they may still claim.

But I have thus far touched only upon a cause that may account for the decline of reverence towards the aged, but does not explain the strain between the older and the younger generation. The

strain implies antagonism, hostility. And this appears markedly in the political and social radicalism of many of the younger people, in their extreme views on marriage and the defiant rebelliousness with which they affect to outrage what are considered the proprieties in dress and manners and social customs. The rancor, the resentment that is felt in some of these young hearts to-day, is aptly illustrated in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. "In the first place," says the young author, with a burning heart, "the older generation has certainly pretty well ruined this world before passing it on to us. They gave us this thing knocked to pieces, leaky, threatening to blow up, and then are surprised if we do not accept it with decorous enthusiasm. They turn over their wreck to us." He means, of course, the war. We of the older generation have been accustomed to blame the militarists or the imperialists, or this or that faction or party for the war. The younger generation, seeing the general wreckage, refuses to distinguish who in particular is to blame, but indicts the generation that has been in charge of the world as a whole, and throws upon us collectively the responsibility. "You pass over this leaky, shipwrecked world to us to mend, for us to bear the burdens of your folly, of your culpable negligence, and in addition you ask us to *respect* you. You ought to be more than grateful," seems to be the inference, "if we are willing to forgive you and forget you."

But it is not the state of things created by the

war alone that has produced this drastic effect on thinking young people. They have discovered "rottenness and shortcomings" in all governments, and even if they do not directly espouse what is called anarchism, they tend toward anarchistic ideas. They see "rottenness and shortcomings" too in democracy, and especially they see the contradiction between what we profess and what we practice, the hypocrisy of it all, the universal bluff, the revolting pretense of virtue, screening vice, greed, and selfishness. Was there ever a more manifest falsehood, say the youngsters, for instance, than that the majority rules in our democracy? Is not every one who looks in the least below the surface aware of the damning fact that the majority is manipulated in the interests of selfish minority cliques, that by a species of ventriloquism the voice that really comes from the minority is projected upon the majority so as to appear to emanate from them? Does not every one know by what tricks of propaganda the multitude are induced to adopt opinions not really their own? Yet, whenever we young people in the name of an idealistic, public-spirited minority, venture to raise our voice in protest, we are rebuked as anarchists or radicals, and are told that in America the majority rules.

But injustice, and the sin of covering up injustice with hypocrisy, is most keenly resented by the young in the industrial field. The industrial problem has long ceased to concern the employers and laborers alone. It is drawing into its current every social

class, and especially the more generous spirits among the young. The inequity of the present arrangement is too crying to be ignored; and it hurts sensitive consciences that have not yet been hardened by frequent contact with wrong. Thus we have just read of a young man, heir to a million, who refuses to touch what he considers the tainted thing. Others, sons of wealthy families, are endeavoring to equalize their condition, as far as possible, with that of the poor, and young women, refined and delicately reared, are leaving their luxurious homes to work side by side with factory girls in trade organizations; while even among those who are not actively protesting, the spirit of revolt, the condemnation of things as they exist, is widespread.

Now if one group of persons pulls in one direction, and another in exactly the opposite direction, there is strain; and if the younger generation pulls with all its might in the direction of changing things, and the older generation leans back as hard as it can, and stands for keeping things as they are, then there is bound to be tremendous tension. This, I take it, is the situation in all departments of human life to-day. If there were not urgent need for change, if things could be kept as they are, there would be no strain. The younger generation might pull as hard as it pleases, things would remain stiffly in their places. Or, if things could be changed as the younger radicals desire, by a sudden forward movement all along the line, then also there would be no strain, since the older generation would have

to give way, and the whole world, political and social and educational, would be remade in the twinkling of an eye. But as in the nature of things neither side can wholly prevail, there is and is bound to be the strain.

What is to be done? How ease the strain? How replace antagonism by mutual understanding? In the first place, I for one take my stand in sympathy and appreciation on the side of the younger generation. In the spirit of youth we have the precious force on which we must draw for the betterment of things. There must be improvement. The fresh, unspoiled energy and hopefulness of youth, even though it be extravagant, is our chief reliance. I know of no sadder spectacle than that of a youth who sets out in life with fine ideals and presently capitulates, surrenders his ideals as illusions, and becomes as hard in his heart as the business machine into which he fits himself. The idealism of youth, even despite its aberrations, is priceless. If only they knew how much we value them, not condescendingly tolerate them, but look forward to what they can do with intense expectation—that would be the first step toward a good understanding.

Then, as the next essential step, we must convince them that we really care as much as they do for ideal and feasible changes, if indeed we care, for if we do not there can be no mutual understanding. But if we do care, as at least many of us do,

it is for us to convince them that we do, and also to convince them that only by joint efforts of the older and the younger, can desirable changes be brought about, and that the older persons too have something indispensable to contribute.

As against the extreme and unwarranted indictment of the younger generation we can put in the following plea. First, they are wrong in fastening the blame for the world-cataclysm upon their immediate predecessors, on us whom they call the older generation. Not one generation only is to blame. All the generations that have preceded us contributed their errors, their crimes, their blundering gropings, to bring to pass this world disaster. The life of humanity is continuous. The human race may be compared to a single Titan, a Prometheus, who struggles not to steal the divine fire out of the heavens above, but to kindle it in himself, with a view to civilizing himself. And the fire and the clay in his nature are ever at war with each other. He fails tragically, hideously—and then he tries again. To contrast the younger and the older generation as isolated factors opposed to each other is shortsighted. The contrast is between the latest comers and all those who previously have toiled on the difficult upward march.

In the next place democracy, however crude in its workings, is after all a gain compared with the rule of kings, and wage-slavery means progress as compared with serfdom. To be sure I shall not

insist on this point, since any kind of slavery is slavery still, and majority rule is often blind tyranny no less than king rule. The evil in both is still so preponderant that to compare it with those still worse forms of evil that preceded has the appearance of somehow by indirection justifying the evil. But what I insist on is that there is a permanent, unceasing good enshrined in institutions which in other respects stand condemned. And we of the older generation must stand for saving and perpetuating this good. That is our special function, the way in which we indispensably contribute to the improvement of human society. We save the net gain of Prometheus's struggles in the past, we prevent, as the saying is, the child from being spilled with the bath, and to this end we are to pacify the petulance of the young and correct the sweeping verdicts in which they indulge. Only we must remember, that *the good can be saved only by being developed into the better.* Thus we can save the democratic principle only by making it more truly democratic, by expressing democracy in forms which are far more in accord than the present with its fine inward purpose. And we can save the principle of initiative and individuality which is characteristic of the present social system only by making initiative and power in one life consistent with and provocative of initiative and power in all others.

And here I am led to revert once more to the subject of marriage. Some years ago Max Nordau

wrote a book on "The Conventional Lies of Our Civilization." In it there is a chapter on the "marriage lie," setting forth the contradiction between the ideal of marriage and marriage as it is actually lived. And the hypocritical attitude of society in regard to marriage arouses the indignation of the young, who see the extent of irresponsible relations outside of marriage, the enormity of the social evil in the great cities, the temptations put in the way of the daughters of the poor, the tacit connivance at sex transgressions so long as they are kept under cover, and the sharp executioner's ax of social ostracism that falls as soon as the wretched secret is divulged. The outward seeming is fair, say the young critics, and the exterior of the sepulcher is kept carefully white, but within it is filled with filth and corruption. And, even where this is not the case, in the so-called Philistine marriages, what grossness, what sodden spiritual stagnation! Suppose this were all true (as by the testimony of experience it is not), still the theory of the conventional lie is the greatest lie of all, in that it represents as a social convention that which is a social necessity, and generalizes and imputes to all what is true, miserably enough, in part. The marriage institution and custom, as we have inherited it, is a casket that contains a priceless gem, namely, the idea of the unity of two lives, for the sake of achieving, through their inseparable union, the unity of the children's lives with their own.

But this precious good enshrined in marriage must indeed be developed into a better. The unity in the past was based on the subordination of the woman's will and mind to the man's, subordination being the readiest method of consummating oneness. The development of the unity depends on the perfect recognition of an independent mind and will on either side, and on the respect paid to the potential spiritual independence of the child. It is vastly more difficult to relate independent personalities so that harmony shall exist among them, but it is also a spiritual task worthy of supremest endeavor. The solution, therefore, is not to propose I know not what impossible alternative to marriage, or to deride it because its ideal has never been realized, and because some people pharisaically cloak with the ideal their very real derelictions, but rather to present the ideal in a way corresponding to the new and indefeasible claims of independence for woman and offspring, so that it may have a better prospect of being realized, and in particular to be wholly resolved to realize it to the utmost extent possible in one's own relations.

The older and the younger generation will understand each other when they both take the attitude of learners, when both are forward-looking, when both long for the better human society. The older must convince the younger that they appreciate what the younger can contribute—their unspent vigor, their intensity, their unwillingness to tolerate

shams, while they must affirm, in no uncertain voice, that they themselves, the older generation, cannot be spared in the work of reconstruction, and that without the salvation of what is valuable in the acquisitions of the past, the task of the young Titans will be abortive. The young will be glad to learn from those who themselves are learners. That spell never fails.

There are also certain minor and yet important services in respect to manners and social behavior which the initiate can render to the novices. There is at present much studied defiance of conventions by the younger generation, the deliberate intent to outrage the proprieties and to startle those who adhere to them. No doubt such escapades as midnight automobile rides on lonely country roads may be perfectly harmless, and young persons who are self-respecting may preserve their respect for one another, no matter under what perilous circumstances. At the same time, while some of the social conventions are artificial, and might well be done away with, others are valuable safeguards; and the absence of them, as is shown by reports of recent occurrences in certain coeducational colleges of the West, should be a warning as to the peril of neglecting them.

There are who ask not if Thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;

Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do Thy work, and know it not;
Long may the kindly impulse last!
But Thou, if they should totter, teach them
to stand fast!

And it is not the sense of duty alone, but certain safeguards of duty, that will aid them to stand fast. For we human beings are compact of soul and sense, and it is just the idealists who are apt to be overconfident of their strength. They do not measure the force of those torrential passions which sometimes suddenly overwhelm the firmest. They may not meet with utter moral disaster, but they are likely to receive moral wounds, unnecessary revelations of their own weaknesses that will leave their scars for life. It is best to avoid certain occasions. Ulysses had himself bound to the mast when he passed the perilous islands whence the seductive song was wafted towards him. I do not believe in the kind of surveillance that implies distrust by others, but I do believe in prescribing bounds, in being to a certain extent distrustful of oneself, and even if not that, at least in accepting binding ties for the sake of the weaker ones who require the maintenance of a general rule.

In regard to women's garb, I wish also to say a few words. For has not Carlyle in his "Sartor Resartus" established it once for all that there is a philosophy of clothes, and that the subject is not

unworthy of a philosopher, or of the one who, however humbly, aspires in that direction? In the matter of garbing the human figure there is at present a tangle of ideas that ought to be disentangled, and that not only among the young, but among those who cannot with any scientific precision be classed under that head. For instance, it is argued that the rules of decorum in dress are purely arbitrary, since, in certain countries it is considered indecorous to have the head uncovered; or again, that while the head must be covered, the feet must be bare, especially in sanctuaries. But these are tabus, and their connection with religious superstitions is easily traceable. It was believed that the supernatural spirits would somehow be offended by the covering or the uncovering. This argument, therefore, does not touch the seemliness or unseemliness of garbing which we are considering. It has no place in a philosophy of clothes.

Again, the example of the undraped human figure in art is cited as though it were pertinent. But, as I have said, man is compound of soul and sense; and the human figure, as it is presented in art, appeals to the soul and the apprehension of beauty; it leads through the sense upward, and thus tranquillizes and subdues the senses. The human figure in art is never a mere individual, but type and individual both. It is the particular elevated into the universal, and hence it has a kind of hallowing effect. Like the presence in the flaming bush, it imposes distance and aloofness upon the beholder. It speaks: Come not

too nigh; the ground whereon thou treadest is ethereal. The example drawn from art, therefore, does not apply to the living, breathing individuals whom we meet in daily intercourse.

Mr. Seton Thompson was once reported in the newspapers as approving the modern fashions of women's dress, as a movement in the direction of a return to the innocence of the South Sea Islanders. I fancy that he spoke ironically, or must have been misreported. For the state of innocence, either of young children or of primitive peoples, is that of beings who have not yet acquired the sense of a distinctive personality of their own, and the civilized peoples are those who have more or less acquired that consciousness. The custom of garbing the person is *evidence* of the sense of personality. We withdraw from public gaze as a profanation whatever is intimate. You may think, for instance, that the face of a man or a woman is open to every one's inspection, but it is not so. To the casual passer-by, or even to the more distant acquaintance, the face is often an impenetrable screen not revealing the inner thought or purpose at all, but rather concealing it. And even where this is not so, the face of a highly developed man or woman only allows those expressions of the inner life to pass outward which concern the more general social relations; while it is in the circle of the most intimate friends only, of the dearest, the most cherished, the most congenial companions, that the soul advances from its recesses to its gate, that the love-light is

kindled in the eye, that the facial expression sheds forth fully and freely the riches that have been kept from the unintimate or the uncongenial. Thus even the face, though it is uncovered, is in fact covered wherever the sense of personality is pronounced, wherever the man or the woman is truly civilized. Civilization and the sense of personality go together. Whatever is connected with intimate relations is desecrated by being exhibited to the public gaze.

In normal times, when the customs of society are more or less settled, these things can be left to the finer instincts, to their sure though unconscious tactful guidance in discriminating between what is seemly and unseemly. But in this transitional age of ours when the finer instincts, and the conventions, good and bad alike, are being questioned, reasons must be given. I think the reasons I have here given should suffice. The sense of personality supplies the criterion by which to judge between that which is purely artificial and that which is grounded in the spiritual nature of human beings.

In science the newest is apt to be the truest, because the data accumulate, and more elaborate methods of experimentation lead to the discovery of previously unknown laws. In the sphere of conduct, nothing of the kind is the case. There experience counts, and judgment, which is slower to ripen than knowledge or technical skill and which comes with the years. And most of all wisdom counts; wisdom which springs from the baffling of effort, which

wrests from defeat the prize of victory, which finds after every thwarted effort the perennial impulse whence springs the courage to new effort. Such wisdom the young world reconstructers will need, for they too will be baffled, as we have been.

The conclusion of it all is that everything depends on the right attitude. Authority simply no longer counts. If a father complains that he is not reverenced, he must realize that he cannot coerce reverence, but only win it by proving himself worthy of it. If in the home the man thinks himself at liberty to give vent to his impetuosities because he is, after all, the head, he must realize that he will be censured, if not overtly, then silently, by those who concede to fathers no such wretched privilege. If he is a hard taskmaster in his mill, he will raise up against himself the protest of his own flesh and blood, of those sons and daughters of his who have begun to scent in the morning air of mankind the fragrance of a better order.

The strain between the older and the newer generation will disappear when both take the attitude of learners; when neither the one nor the other insists on the particular claims and rights of their generation, but jointly look ahead towards the generations and generations that are to come and jointly strive to prepare for their coming.

VII

THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE DEPARTED

THE frequent inadequacy of language to express meanings is forcibly brought home to one in seeking a word to designate the friends no longer with us. Shall we say "the dead"? But dead means utterly gone. "Utterness" is its characteristic in its widest as well as its narrowest use. Shall we say "the defunct," that is, those who have ceased to function? Shall we say "the deceased," the departed? The German language has an advantage in the word *selig* (blessed). A German can speak of his father as my *blessed* father. The French also have the word *feu,* which, by the way, has no connection with fire, but with the Latin *fatum,* meaning those who have accomplished their fate, their destiny. Montesquieu says *"Feu ma mère."* In English, perhaps the word "departed" is the least objectionable.

Looking back on human history there are two striking phenomena that stand out preëminent. One is the instinctive unwillingness of men to admit annihilation, the tenacious affirmation of the persistence in some form of those who have disappeared from the scene. Curiously, even the materialist pays hom-

age to this notion of persistence by asserting, with apparent satisfaction, that the elements of which the body is composed, as atoms at least, remain indestructible. The other phenomenon alluded to is the fervid desire of the survivors to do something for the departed to show them love—love ever exhibiting itself in the desire to benefit the beloved object. It is this trait that explains the labor and expense lavished on the tombs of the ancient Egyptian kings, one of which, that of Tutankhamen, has recently been opened after over three thousand years. The treasure it contains, the costly furnishings, are evidence of the desire to minister to the comfort and to mark the lofty station of the king, who in some sense was supposed still to inhabit the dark chamber.

The funeral rites described in the Iliad, designed as they were to speed the journey of the departed hero to the land of shades, bear similar testimony. Likewise in every Roman Catholic Church the masses said for the repose of the souls are evidence in point, as also the mourners' prayer—Kaddish—repeated by the Jew for an entire year, and thereafter on every anniversary of a parent's death.

There is a third phenomenon in connection with this subject that should not be overlooked, namely, the almost inconceivable tendency to keep up illusions about graves, and about those who are supposed to sleep in them, illusions that fly straight in the face of the facts. The very notion of the loved

one as resting in the grave is a pathetic trick of fancy. That which lies in the grave is plainly not the beloved person, is no person at all, but a decaying organism, on the actual condition of which the mind may not dwell. Why then speak of the friend as "sleeping" in the grave? Why keep up this false notion? Is it merely a caprice of the poetic imagination? Even as such it would not be entirely harmless. But there is plenty of evidence that poetic metaphor is too often taken literally. Sentimental people seem to feel that they are nearer to the one they have lost at the particular spot where what is perishable in him is in process of perishing, than they would be elsewhere; and so a kind of cultus of the grave arises which is sometimes shocking in its consequences. I remember the case of a woman who, after she had lost her only daughter, visited the grave day after day, neglecting her home duties, making a hideous travesty of grief, haunting the cemetery, clinging to the turf. This, of course, is an extreme example, but it illustrates sentimentality usurping the place of genuine sentiment. It brings out that wrong turn of feeling, of which we have also many milder instances. What matters is precisely to turn the feelings in the opposite direction—from that which is perishable and which is bound to perish, to that which is, if there be any such thing as we hope to find there is, imperishable.

Of course the average human mind is incapable of conceiving that anything exists which cannot be touched or seen, and so the average individual finds

himself in the following dilemma. His instinct leads him to believe that his friend cannot be wholly gone. But the friend being invisible, the mind fastens, contrary to the plain facts, on the body of the friend, as if it were somehow living, only asleep. Or when attention is diverted from the grave as the abode of the friend, there still remains the incapacity to think of him otherwise than bodily, and so in imagination he is invested with an attenuated body, a body which is as little body as possible but still a body. The friend becomes what is called a spirit, but what is really a ghost, a thing floating somewhere in upper air, no one knows where.

In any case it is best, as soon as possible after the death of that which dies, to think of that which lives. And for this reason the practice of cremation is commendable, since it hastens the process of dissolution by the pure ministry of flame, and at once and entirely causes to disappear that which no longer can be visible or palpable.

At the present day, however, one cannot help noticing a radical change in the world in regard to people's attitude toward the departed. The too close clinging to the visible self of the friend is becoming the exception. The instinctive belief, if it be, as I think, instinctive, in the persistence of something imperishable in the friend is, at least temporarily, becoming weakened, and instead the waters of oblivion are allowed to close over the departed and the memory of the departed. *The quick forget-*

ting—"out of sight, out of mind"—seems to be becoming more general.

The reasons for this change of attitude are not far to seek. One is the mad speed of modern life. We have not the time to remember those who have gone. We have hardly the time for self-recollection. The pace is too dizzy. We cannot stand still. Formerly, when a funeral passed through the streets, with measured step to solemn music, the passers-by stopped, bared the head in token of respect. Nowadays one hardly notices a funeral—there are so many that rush by; and since the auto hearse has come into use, the dead themselves seem, as it were, to be caught in the general whirl of movement, impatient to hurry on.

Again, the feeling largely prevails that a man has only this one life to live, that he too will presently be carried off the scene, and therefore that it is the part of wisdom to make the most of this brief existence while one has it, and not to cloud the present sunshine with the shadows of sad remembrance. Or again, in some cases, there is a sort of depreciation of the older generation by the younger, a sort of irreverence for the past that tends to sweep out of mind the memory of older persons who have passed away, who belong to the past. They were regarded as backward while they still lived; why should one care to remember them particularly when they are no longer present? The recent stupendous progress in science and invention has contributed to this feeling. The science of to-day is far in advance of the

science even of yesterday. Textbooks of ten years ago are already obsolete, and modern inventiveness is registering achievements beyond the dreams even of our recent predecessors.

Yet the same is not true of character and human worth. The man in the street to-day, the average American, for instance, just as a man, does not compare with the noble, rounded characters of antiquity —the great Greeks and Romans, the great figures of Hebrew prophecy, the fine types of the Renaissance, and at least certain ones among the fathers of our Republic. And even among the unscientific and humbler parents of the present generation there may be examples of human excellence which it is not well to ignore, nor to commit to the dust-bin of forgetfulness.

These are general considerations. There are also more specific motives that conduce to the present change of attitude—the wish to forget, the invocation of oblivion. Sometimes the loss is so keenly felt by the survivors that they shrink from mentioning the name in conversation. The wound is still too sensitive, the grief too poignant, the vacancy in the home circle too recent. In this way the habit of silence with regard to the departed is formed, and the months pass, and the years pass, *and the silence continues,* until inevitably the image of the departed becomes dim.

Or again, a man exceptionally devoted to his wife cannot bear to think of the loss of her, and forcibly

to distract himself, plunges into work, deliberately lets himself be absorbed in work. And thus, again in time, a habit is formed, the feelings become less painful indeed, but also the thought of the lost one grows more faint.

In many families among the best people I have noticed that the remembrance of fathers and grandfathers, still vivid in my own recollection, to all appearance at least has been blotted out. Also I am a member of a club of scholars, very limited in number, in close relations for many years. One of our members, whom we very greatly respected, died a few years ago. I do not think that I have heard his name mentioned among us a single time since then. Why this silence, if it does not mean "Let the dead bury their dead"?

But there is another situation of which we must have the courage to speak. The silence may be due to the fact that the person who has gone was objectionable, that one does not wish to think of him, that one has not so much grief as a grievance, which has not been purged out of one's heart. And therefore, in order not to rake up the embers of old hatreds, old misunderstandings, it is thought best to let the recollection of the one who has gone go with him, deliberately to forget.

But it is time to end this review, and to consider the ethical attitude towards the departed. What should it be ideally? How shall it be defined? It is to be defined in relation to the task of mankind on

this earth—the task of mankind as a whole, and hence also of every human being. That task is progress toward the more perfect society, the ethically perfect society, toward the incarnation of the spiritual principle in human society, the principle which bids us live in promoting life, instead of living as the beasts do, at the expense of other life. To ethicize human relationships is the task. And the way we are to think of the departed one is as of one whose duty and destiny it was to aid in this great human business of ethical progress.* What did he accomplish, what valuable qualities had he which deserve to be transmitted, to be perpetuated by ourselves, the survivors? What seeds of good were in him which require to be further developed? What light did his failures as well as his aspirations shed upon the spiritual possibilities of man?

Bearing this in mind, we must at the same time strictly determine to deal with actualities, for instance not to pretend that the departed have always been good or that they may not have been commonplace from the world's point of view, nonentities, or that they have not left stings behind which one finds it hard to extract from one's consciousness. The question is: How can one apply the ethical attitude in the three situations just mentioned?

There are bad lives. Some of the departed have

* Just as we hallow marriage by thinking of the relation in which the life of the past streams through the married couple into the life of the future, to be purified and enhanced as it passes, so we hallow our relation to the departed by the like orientation towards the future goal of mankind.

lived bad lives. Not indeed absolutely bad—no human being is absolutely bad. But it may happen that a son is unfortunate enough to inherit a name which his father has disgraced. What is his duty? To atone for his father, to expiate the offense—not merely from a sense of pride—to clear the family escutcheon, not merely in order that he may hold his head erect, despite his bearing the once dishonored but now by him honored name. The deeper thought is: humanity retrograded in your father, it is for you, the son, to recover the ground lost by humanity. That this is not a fanciful notion, but an effectual motive, not a few notable examples prove.

There are commonplace lives. On the occasion of the funeral obsequies the officiating speaker, asking for particulars about the departed, is not infrequently met with the embarrassed remark that there is nothing particular to be said. There were no events of special interest that marked his life, there are no outstanding qualities to be pointed to. To me at least, I am bound to say, it is just such a life that is most appealing—the life in which the possibilities existed, but were never actualized. It is not the so-called important events, it is not what a man has done as a citizen, or as a philanthropist, that really impress me. They do not impress me so much because they are surface manifestations, because it is at least possible that a man may have been distinguished in that way, and yet have been unspiritual, unfine at the core. I do not, of course, mean to imply that public spirit and manifest virtue

are inconsistent with a high type of spirituality. I insist that the one does not necessarily imply the other.

And further, in regard to these commonplace lives, there is always something that demands expression, especially the basic human relationships of father, mother, brother, and the like. These afford a text to dwell upon. These challenge comment and eulogy. The relationships themselves should be eulogized. The beauty that is implicit in them should be conjured up, even if the departed person did not fulfill the rôle of the ideal father, or the husband, or the brother, or what not. Who ever does live up to the ideal? Yet he suggested that ideal. The very relation in which he stood to the survivor evokes the ideal from its hidden depth.

At the funeral the object should be to lead those present to take in the whole of the life that has here ended. We see one another by fits and starts, we get glimpses of each other's personality. We rarely see even those with whom we are constantly associated, in their totality. The moment when they go from us is the time to fix their memory, to draw a mental portrait of them, as it were, and to place it in the gallery of memory. But especially the basic human relationships and their sacred meaning is the topic on which one may dwell.

I have said that there are bad lives which should be expiated, and that there are also commonplace lives, in which, however, the human relationships stand out prominently; and that what is implicit in

these relations may be made explicit. Expiation and explication are the first two points significant of the ethical attitude.

In the next place there are cases in which the remembrance of the departed is difficult for the survivor because of friction, of misunderstanding. For instance, there are two brothers—one is scientifically minded, the other religiously minded. The one makes almost a fetish of scientific exactness, and has little respect for those intellectual and moral activities in which the mind is constrained to grope for certainty without attaining more than approximation—the difference involved being that between the sphere in which the relation of cause and effect predominates and the sphere in which the relation of means to an end predominates. The consequence of the disparity in temperament and intellectual outlook between the two brothers is felt throughout their lives. Natural affection remains the bond, holds them together. But in a way the very closeness of the tie which is never relaxed only accentuates the painfulness of the intellectual uncongeniality. The one brother dies. What shall be the ethical attitude of the other? I have said above that on the occurrence of death, the survivor should draw the mental portrait of the departed as he was. I now go much further and say, the survivor should draw the spiritual image as the departed would have been if his nature had been ideally completed—in the instance mentioned, as he would have been if, beyond his honorable scientific conscientiousness he

had also embraced the ideal of perfection as it is seized by the religious mind. The spiritual image thus completed will then react upon the survivor, will have the effect upon him of supplementing his nature on the scientific side, where it needs to be supplemented.

We have thus three leadings that mark the ethical attitude—expiation, explication, supplementation.

I mentioned in the beginning the instinctive unwillingness of mankind to admit annihilation, the instinctive impulse to affirm continuity of some sort, and also to wish to do something for the benefit of the beloved who are no longer with us. Continuity, in my account of the ethical attitude, is now defined in terms of influence. The continuity of the life that is no longer visibly present, is in its influence on the survivor.* And the relation is not unilateral, as some think, the remembrance benefiting us, while we cannot benefit the departed. We benefit them by completing their spiritual image.†

The ethically perfect society is the goal, but this goal, you will remind me, is never attained. True, but the increasing vision of the perfect spiritual so-

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* This presupposes the sovereign conception of the task of humanity, that is, of progress toward the ethically perfect society. If this *terminus ad quem,* this goal, be ruled out, then the influence is a transient phenomenon, a wave that rises and subsides, and to speak of persistence in connection with it is illegitimate.

† That is, by idealizing them. Idealizing, however, must be strictly distinguished from idolizing. Idolizing is to represent the departed as if they were perfect, which no human beings are. Idealizing is the sublime work of the imagination, to represent them as they would be with their deficiencies transcended.

ciety is attained and in that vision the reality of what man is in essence, now and in all eternity. This being so, a final word is required on the subject of immortality.

I have repeatedly made my confession of faith as to this point. It comprises two statements. There is in man an essence, an infinitesimal of the infinite, as such imperishable. The characteristic attribute of this essence is that it is a life, not a thing, not static, but dynamic; and that its life consists in acting upon and enhancing other life, quickening and being quickened. Hence the spiritual tie, the tie that binds spiritual beings, is inseparable in all eternity.

In connection with this, however, two difficulties must be confronted. Of what avail is it to say that my departed beloved one exists, if I can have no notion of the manner of his or her existence—since pure being, existence, unclothed with the grace of form, the sweet expression of the eye, the tender touch of the hand, is distant and blank? As well non-existence, some ardent lover might say. My answer here is similar to that of the theist. All the profound theistic thinkers have declared their belief that God, the one individual God, is unknowable, that man can form no notion of what he is in himself, or of how he lives, that he can be known only through his *effects,* which are supposed to be, in his case the creation and government of the world. Similarly we can know the spiritual essence of the departed, which is a part of the eternal life only

through its effects. And these effects we must experience. The chief effect is reverence for man, for all men, for oneself, because of the divine essence that inhabits men. And the other, no less uplifting effect, is the sense of indestructible and insunderable connection with our fellow spirits.

But here the last objection arises. For suppose a husband married to a woman upon whom his whole soul is anchored, whom he cannot let go, the light of his life, and who by death is taken from him. Is there not a difficuty in the fact that the spiritual, inseparable connection beyond death, irrespective of death, is a connection with an infinite number of spiritual beings, and not just with this one beloved? And is not love exclusive? Does not love repel the idea of a similar intimacy with any except the one, the counterpart, the excellent friend of the soul, the comrade, the more than comrade? True, but why in our earthly life this exclusiveness? Because closeness is repugnant where there is not the intimate congeniality, and because intimate congeniality, the subtle understanding, the subtle adaptation, the harmonious flow of life in the world in which we live is impossible except between two—nay, if the point be pressed, is never absolutely perfect even between the two. But, on the other hand, the very notion of the ideal, eternal community is of a community in which there is infinite congeniality, in which the infinite possible sides of our being seek and find infinite complementation, in which there is no screen hiding us from any of our fellow-spirits, in which we know

all and are known of all as essentially we are, in which there is a perfect flow of life in life between all.

The Gospel says that in Heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage. What I here say of marriage is that it is the earthly symbol of the infinite and universal union of spirits. And what furthermore I say is that the highest good which a man can receive from the woman he loves is that she shall enlighten his eyes to see the infinite relations of being, that she shall be to him the revealer of the eternal world, that she shall appear to him not only as the particular star of his life, but disclose to him the infinite galaxy that envelops her.

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